WARCRAFT
THE SUNWELL TRILOGY
GHOSTLANDS
RICHARD A. KNAAK · JAE-HWAN KIM
INCLUDES AN EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT OF THE NEW WARCRAFT NOVEL FROM POCKET BOOKS!

Warcraft®: The Sunwell Trilogy™ Vol. 3

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Volume 3

Ghostlands

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HISTORY OF THE WORLD OF WARCRAFT®

The world of Azeroth has long been plagued by the misuse of magic. Originally, only dragons and night elves were able to practice the mystic arts, though eventually, even humans began to wield the unstable energy. Unfortunately, the unrestrained spell-casting eventually caught the attention of a malevolent, extra-dimensional force known as the Burning Legion.

The Burning Legion's first attempt to invade Azeroth, known as the War of the Ancients, was only thwarted after many lives were lost and the world's sole continent was shattered. With their second attempt, the Burning Legion used the Orcs from the world of Draenor as their pawns.

Twisted and corrupted by the Burning Legion's influence, the Orcs invaded Azeroth through the Dark Portal. After many ferocious battles, this Second War ended with the Orcs' defeat and imprisonment. Still determined to conquer Azeroth, the Burning Legion created one of its most twisted servants, the Lich King, to weaken Azeroth's defenders.

The Lich King spread a plague of death and terror across Azeroth that was meant to snuff out human civilization. All those who died from the dreaded plague would arise as the undead, and their spirits would be bound to the Lich King's iron will forever.

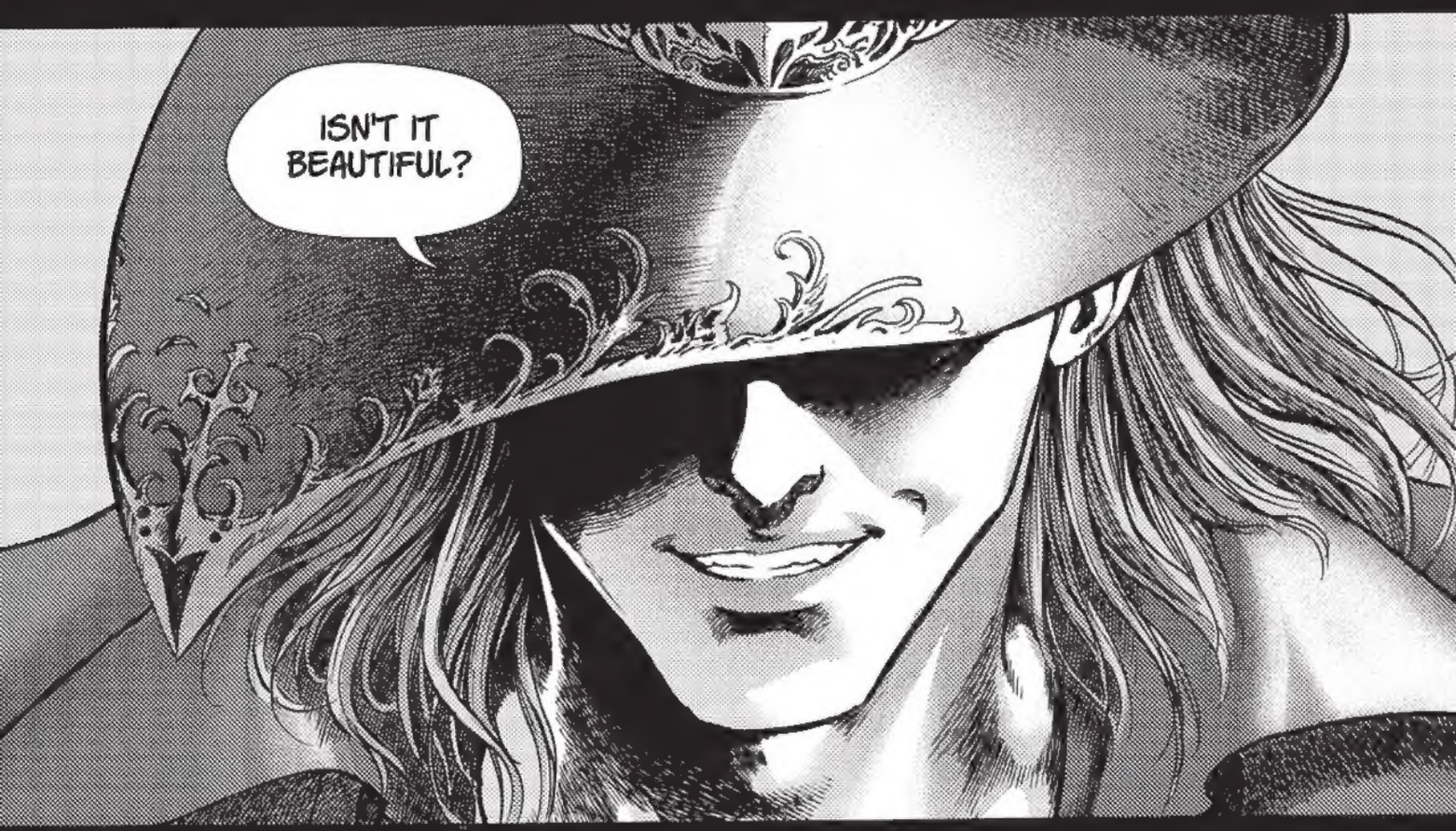
The army of the dead swept across the land, and Quel'Thalas, the glorious homeland of the high elves which had stood for thousands of years, was no more. The undead Scourge then moved south to Dalaran, and then to Kalimdor, home of the night elves.

Though the undead Scourge was stopped at Kalimdor, they had essentially transformed Lordaeron and Quel'Thalas into toxic Plaguelands. Grieving for the loss of their homeland, most of the high elves have adopted a new name and a new mission. Calling themselves blood elves, they now seek out and siphon magic from any available source, including demons.

Meanwhile, half of the undead forces staged a coup for control over the undead empire. Eventually, the banshee Sylvanas Windrunner and her rebel undead--known as the Forsaken--claimed the ruined capital city of Lordaeron as their own and vowed to drive the Scourge from the land.

Currently the Lich King resides in Northrend; he is rumored to be rebuilding the citadel of Icecrown. His trusted lieutenant, Kel'Thuzad, commands the Scourge in the Plaguelands. Sylvanas and her rebel Forsaken hold only the Tirisfal Glades, a small portion of the war-torn kingdom, while the humans, orcs, and night elves are trying to rebuild their societies

CHAPTER ONE
THE NIGHTMARE PLAINS



QUEL'THALAS...

FLAP

FLAP

IT BEGAN HERE...
...SO IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT IT ENDS HERE.
THE PLACE OF MY BIRTH...
...AND YOURS.

FASTER, TYRI! FASTER!
I CAN GO NO FASTER, KALECGOS!
WE HAVE TO CATCH UP TO THEM! THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT DAR'KHAN WILL DO TO ANVEENA!
SOMEHOW RAAC KNOWS WHERE THEY ARE. HE'LL LEAD US TO THEM, I KNOW IT!
YOU JUST HAVE TO KEEP UP WITH HIM!
HOW CAN HE..BE... SO SWIFT?

THIS... RAAC CREATURE. YOU SAY IT HATCHED FROM AN EGG UNDER HER HOME?
YES... AND I WAS CERTAIN IT WAS THE KEY TO THIS SUNWELL DAR'KHAN SEEKS!
ONLY... HE'S TAKEN ANVEENA AND LEFT RAAC BEHIND!
I THINK I UNDERSTAND NOW!
RAAC IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK! HE IS NOT PART OF THE SUNWELL!
NO, HE SURELY MUST BE THE WORK OF BOREL...

BOREL! WHO IN THE NAME OF MALYGOS IS HE?
EVEN I CANNOT SAY FOR CERTAIN...OR EVEN IF HIS NAME IS TRULY BOREL.
I ONLY KNOW THAT WHEN I ESCAPED MY MAD LORD, ARTHUS, I WAS ALL SPENT. I RAN WITHOUT THINKING, WITHOUT HOPE.
AND WHEN I COULD RUN NO FARTHER, I FELL DOWN TO DIE.

BUT BEFORE I PERISHED, THERE CAME ANOTHER.
HE HELPED ME SURVIVE...
...HEALED MY WOUNDS...
...AND THEN OFFERED ME THE CHANCE TO REDEEM MYSELF...WHICH I GLADLY TOOK.

HE SENT ME OUT WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT ONE DAY HE WOULD SUMMON ME BACK.
I WAITED...BUT IN THAT TIME, I DID NOT REMAIN IDLE. AGAIN AND AGAIN, I SOUGHT ON MY OWN TO REDEEM MYSELF.
IT WAS NEVER ENOUGH, THOUGH... AND WHEN HIS VOICE ENTERED MY MIND, I WILLINGLY TURNED BACK...
...AND JOURNEYED TO TARREN MILL...TO WAIT.

AND WAIT THERE I DID, FOR WEEKS. BOREL NEVER CAME TO ME, THOUGH IT SEEMS HE VISITED ANVEENA
THE WAIT NEARLY DROVE ME MAD
OW I SEE, THOUGH, THAT I WAS MEANT TO WAIT...FOR *TROUBLE*.
AND THAT'S IT? YOU DON'T KNOW HIS CONNECTION TO ANVEENA?
NO, I—
KALEC! JORAD! LOOK! WE ARE NEARLY THERE!

QUEL'THALAS...

SNAP
URR?
WOOOSH

SLAASSH
SH!IKFWE
HA!
URR--KK!

SLAASH
HURRGH!
HUFF HUFF
?!

THIS DOES NOT BODE WELL! THERE ARE MORE AND MORE OF THESE THINGS ABOUT!
WE CAN SURELY HANDLE THEM, LOR'THEMAR.
CAN WE, HALDURON? WITH EACH FIGHT, WE LOSE MORE OF US... AND FOR WHAT?
I DREAM OF A QUEL'THALAS RENEWED, BUT BY OUR WEAPONS ALONE, THAT WILL NOT COME TO PASS.
SIGH. LET US BURN OUR COMRADES AND THIS REFUSE SO THEY CANNOT BE RAISED AS UNDEAD BY THE SCOURGE.

THERE MUST BE A REASON WHY SO MANY SCOURGE HAVE APPEARED HERE OF LATE.
ALL BUT ONE OF THE SCOUTS HAVE RETURNED, THOUGH, AND THEY REPORT NOTHING!
STILL, THERE HAS TO BE-- WAIT!
LOR'THEMAR! DIRE NEWS!
I WAS NEAR THE SITE OF THE BLESSED SUNWELL, WHEN I SAW HIM! THE ROGUE HAS RETURNED!

WHO? WHO DID YOU SEE?
'TWAS DAR'KHAN! THE BETRAYER HIMSELF!
DAR'KHAN?!? HE DARES STEP FOOT IN QUEL'THALAS AFTER HIS BLASPHEMOUS DEEDS?
SO, THIS EXPLAINS THE SCOURGE!
EVERYONE! QUICKLY! GATHER YOUR WEAPONS! WE MUST LEAVE THE PYRE FOR LATER!

I SEE HIS MOCKING FACE IN MY DREAMS, HALDURON! I SEE HIS MISDEEDS PLAY OVER AND OVER!
I SEE WHAT HE DID TO GLORIOUS QUEL'THALAS...
A REALM I SWORE TO PROTECT WITH MY LIFE...
AS A COMMANDER OF THE RANGERS, IT WAS MY DUTY TO WATCH OVER THE SAFETY OF THOSE WHO GUIDED THE SUNWELL'S ENERGIES SO THAT THEY, IN TURN, COULD WATCH OVER ALL OUR PEOPLE.
AND TO THINK, DURING THAT DUTY, I BECAME FRIENDS WITH HIM.

AMONG THE MAGES, HE SEEMED MOST APPRECIATIVE OF OUR GOOD WORK AND ASKED MUCH ABOUT IT.
LIKE A FOOL, I SHOWED HIM ALL..
...AND ONLY TOO LATE DISCOVERED HIS EVENTUAL DUPLICITY!
HOW WELL I RECALL DESPERATELY TRYING TO REACH THE SUNWELL IN TIME--

--ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT THE TREACHERY WAS EVEN GREATER THAN I COULD HAVE IMAGINED!
ONLY THEN DID I KNOW THAT HE HAD BETRAYED ALL QUEL'THALAS BY AIDING THE SCOURGE IN ENTERING!
I FOUGHT AS BEST I COULD, HOPING THAT THERE WAS YET A CHANCE!
BUT, DESPITE MY EFFORTS...
...IT WAS TOO LATE!

SOMEHOW, I LIVED, BUT FOR HOW LONG I LAY LIKE DEATH, I STILL CANNOT SAY.
I PUSHED ON, YET HOPING THAT WHAT I FEARED WAS NOT TRUE.
BUT WHAT I FOUND... WHAT HAD BECOME OF THE SUNWELL... WAS FAR WORSE THAN ANY NIGHTMARE I HAD IMAGINED!

I SWORE THEN THAT I WOULD KEEP THE MEMORY OF QUEL'THALAS AND THE SUNWELL FROM BEING FURTHER TAINTED...ESPECIALLY BY THE BETRAYER!
COME, LET US WELCOME OUR WAYWARD BROTHER HOME...
...BY PLANTING HIS GRINNING HEAD ON THE END OF A SPEAR!

WOOOSH
HURR?
KRUNCH

CHAPTER TWO

MASTER OF THE DEAD

SO MANY DEAD...

WE CAN DO NOTHING FOR THEM NOW, KALEC.

YOU'RE RIGHT, WE CAN'T. ALL THAT MATTERS NOW IS ANVEENA.

RAAC!
FLAP FLAP
AND FROM THE WAY RAAC IS ACTING, SHE CAN'T BE FAR! COME ON! WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO TRUST TO THE SKIES IN THIS STRANGE WEATHER, BUT WE CAN STILL MAKE GOOD TIME ON FOOT!
I WON'T LET YOU DOWN, ANVEENA-- I PROMISE YOU.
AND DAR'KHAN WILL PAY DEARLY FOR EVERYTHING...

YOU STILL SEEM SURPRISED TO FIND ME WHOLE.
NATURALLY, I WAS ABLE TO WHISK MYSELF AWAY BEFORE THE FIRES FULLY ENVELOPED ME! I CHOSE TO LET YOU ALL THINK I PERISHED UNTIL THE TIME WAS RIGHT! GREAT ARE THE POWERS GRANTED ME BY MY LORD ARTHAS!
YOU UNDERSTAND ABOUT POWER, DO YOU NOT?
POWER, SUCH AS THE SUNWELL HELD...
POWER THAT WAS USED IN PART TO RAISE MY LORD ARTHAS'S SERVANT, THE GREAT KEL'THUZAD!
WHOOOO

MY REWARD FOR AIDING IN KEL'THUZAD'S RETURN SHOULD HAVE BEEN GRANTED ME...
BUT, AS YOU KNOW, SO MUCH WENT WRONG.
AT FIRST, I BELIEVED THE SUNWELL WAS DESTROYED, LOST TO ME!
MY RIGHT! MY REWARD!
BUT ALL THAT'S CHANGED...

THE SUNWELL HAS RETURNED TO ME!
AND YOU, LITTLE ONE, ARE THE KEY TO MAKING IT MINE FOREVER!
IT IS THE BETRAYER! HE HAS A HUMAN FEMALE PRISONER!
WHAT DO WE DO, LOR'THEMAR?
WE SURROUND HIM AS BEST AS WE CAN!
HALDURON, TAKE HALF AND CIRCLE TO THE NORTH! I'LL LEAD THE REST...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND! HOW CAN I DO ANYTHING? DON'T YOU NEED RAAC?
RAAC? THAT FOUL LITTLE ABOMINATION? NO, I THOUGHT HE WAS THE SUNWELL ITSELF...
...BUT I SOON REALIZED MY ERROR!
YOU SEE, IT WAS ONLY HIS PROXIMITY--

DAR'KHAN! YOUR TIME HAS COME, BETRAYER!
WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
AH! IS IT REALLY MY OLD COMRADE, LOR'THEMAR? I THOUGHT YOU DEAD!
A MISTAKE, I SEE...
...BUT ONE READILY REMEDIED!

SO MANY OF YOUR COMRADES PERISHED PROTECTING THE SUNWELL...
THEY HAVE MISSED YOU, LOR'THEMAR!
I THINK IT IS TIME YOU FINALLY JOINED THEM...

DO YOU NOT AGREE?
BY THE WELL!

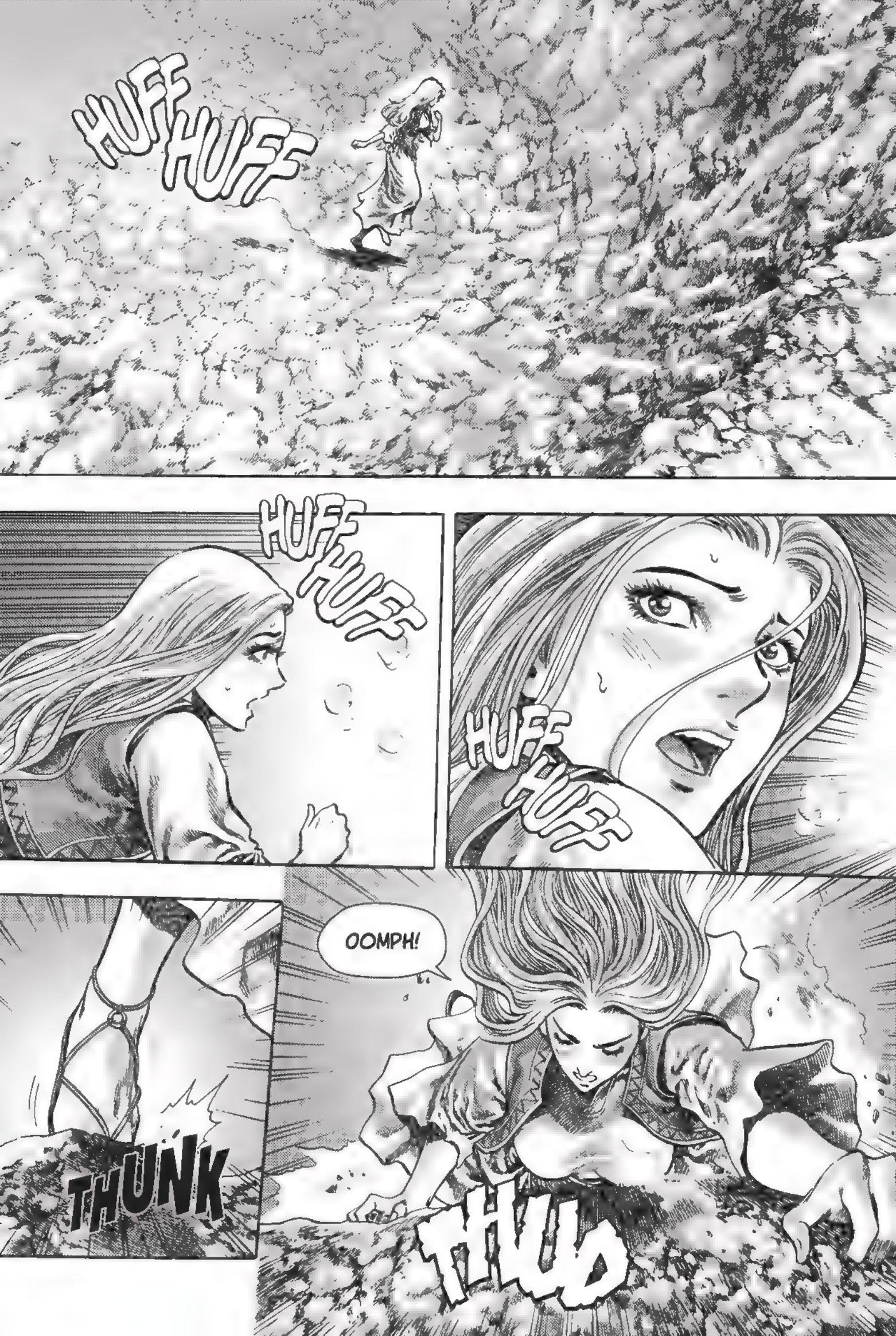
SLAASSH
HURRGH!

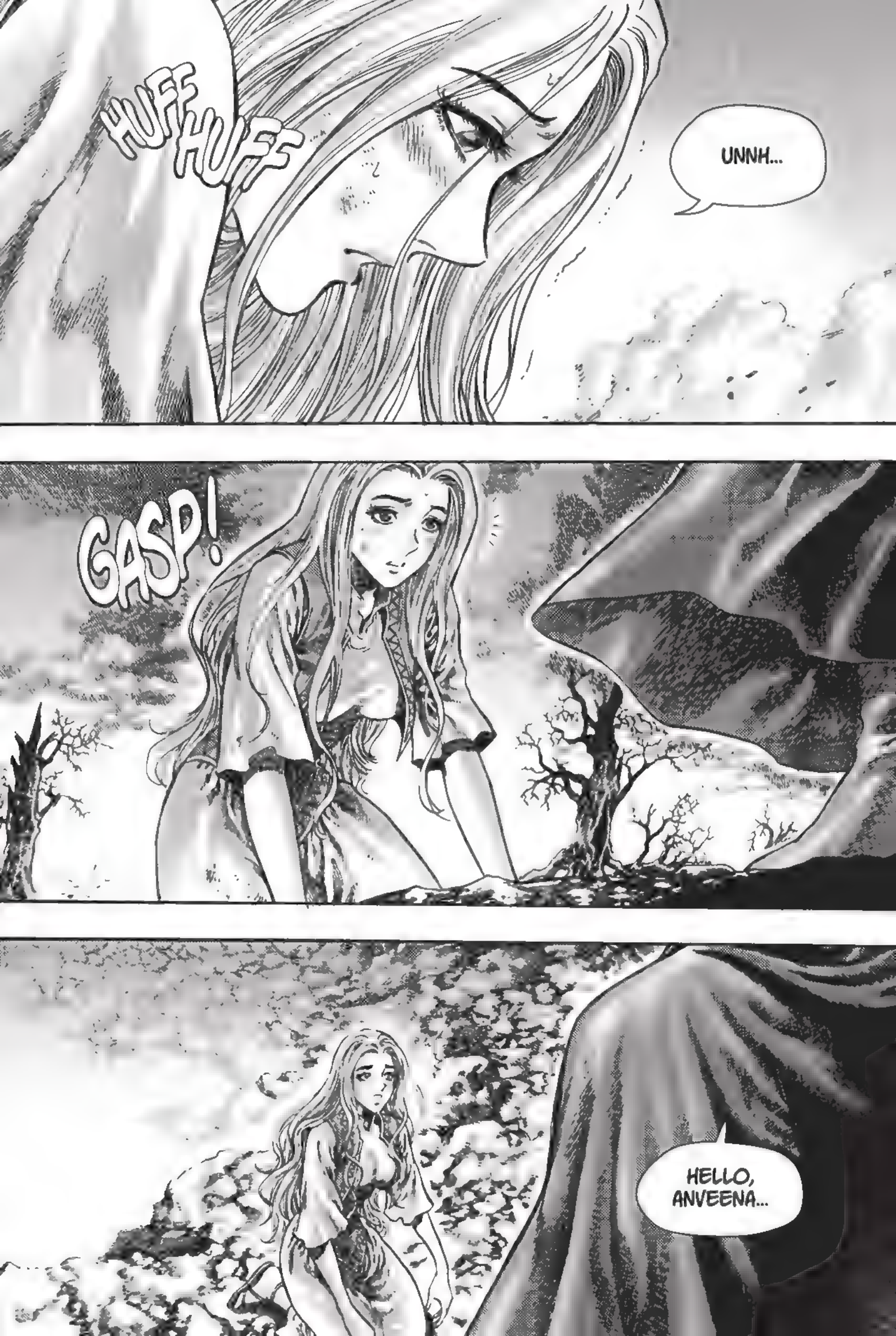
FOR QUEL'THALAS!
CLANG

HAHH!
URRK--!
SCHLOOOP
HNNH!
SLAASSH
?!
HUURRRGH!

GHAA!
AHAHAHA!
AAAARGH!
TOO MANY--PULL BACK! PULL BACK!

AH HA HA! RUN ALL YOU LIKE, FRIEND LOR'THEMAR!
SOON, THERE WILL NOT BE ANYWHERE FAR ENOUGH TO ESCAPE ME!
WELL! THAT WAS AN AMUSING INTERLUDE, WAS IT NOT, LITTLE--
!!!


HUFF HUFF
HUFF HUFF
HUFF HUFF
OOMPH!
THUNK
THUD


HUFF HUFF
UNNH...
GASP!
HELLO, ANVEENA...

I HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU

WHO-- WHO ARE YOU? HOW DO YOU KNOW ME?
I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN ANYONE. I WAS THE ONE TO INITIALLY FIND YOU, TO HELP YOU HIDE UNTIL THE TIME CAME.
BUT THINGS HAVE GONE AWRY. YOU MUST COME WITH ME. WE MUST START OVER AGAIN.
YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD ME WHO YOU ARE!
I HAVE MANY, MANY NAMES, ANVEENA, BUT YOU...YOU KNOW ME AS BOREL.

DID YOU HEAR THAT? IT CAME FROM UP AHEAD.
CLANG
I KNOW THAT SOUND WELL! 'TIS THE CLASH OF BLADES!
BUT WHO WOULD BE FIGHTING OUT HERE?

IT MUST HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH ANVEENA! SHE HAS TO BE NEAR!
IF SO, THEN I SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD! YOUR MAGIC IS HINDERED BY THE COLLAR, WHILE MINE REMAINS STRONG!
AND I CAN RETURN TO MY TRUE FORM AND MAKE CERTAIN THAT--THIS TIME--NOTHING IS LEFT OF DAR'KHAN BUT A CINDER!
THOUGH I AM LOATHE TO ADMIT IT, SHE IS THE MOST POWERFUL OF US, KALEC.
MAYBE, BUT SHE'S ALSO THE MOST HEADSTRONG!

REMEMBER, THE DWARF HARKYN GRYMSTONE CAPTURED HER DESPITE ALL THAT POWER!
WE DRAGONS MAY BE STRONG, BUT WE'RE NOT INVINCIBLE...
I AM GROWING TIRED OF THIS!
YOU'VE BEEN IN THAT MORTAL FORM FAR TOO LONG, KALEC! YOU'RE SOUNDING LIKE ONE OF THEM!

I JUST DON'T WANT ANYONE TO GET HURT, TYRI! YOU CAN'T SIMPLY GO CHARGING IN AGAIN! DAR'KHAN'S TOO CUNNING FOR THAT!
HAVE NO FEAR! I WON'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO YOUR PRECIOUS ANVEENA!
SHIIKK
TYRI! LOOK--
UKK!!!
TWIP
TWIP
TWIP

RRRARRRGH!!
TYR!!!

CHAPTER THREE

CRY OF THE BANSHEE

THOOM

AAAKK!

TYR!!

IT'S ABSORBING HER MAGIC-- SHE CAN'T BREAK FREE!

TYR!!
RELEASE HER, DAMN YOU!
?!

THWAM
UNGH!
EYAAAH!
OOOMPH!

LET HER GO!
....
HYA!
SLAASH

FWAAS
WHAT IN--?! THE BEAST'S WOUNDS HEAL BEFORE MY EYES!
RAAAC!
THWUK
URRK...

SKREEE

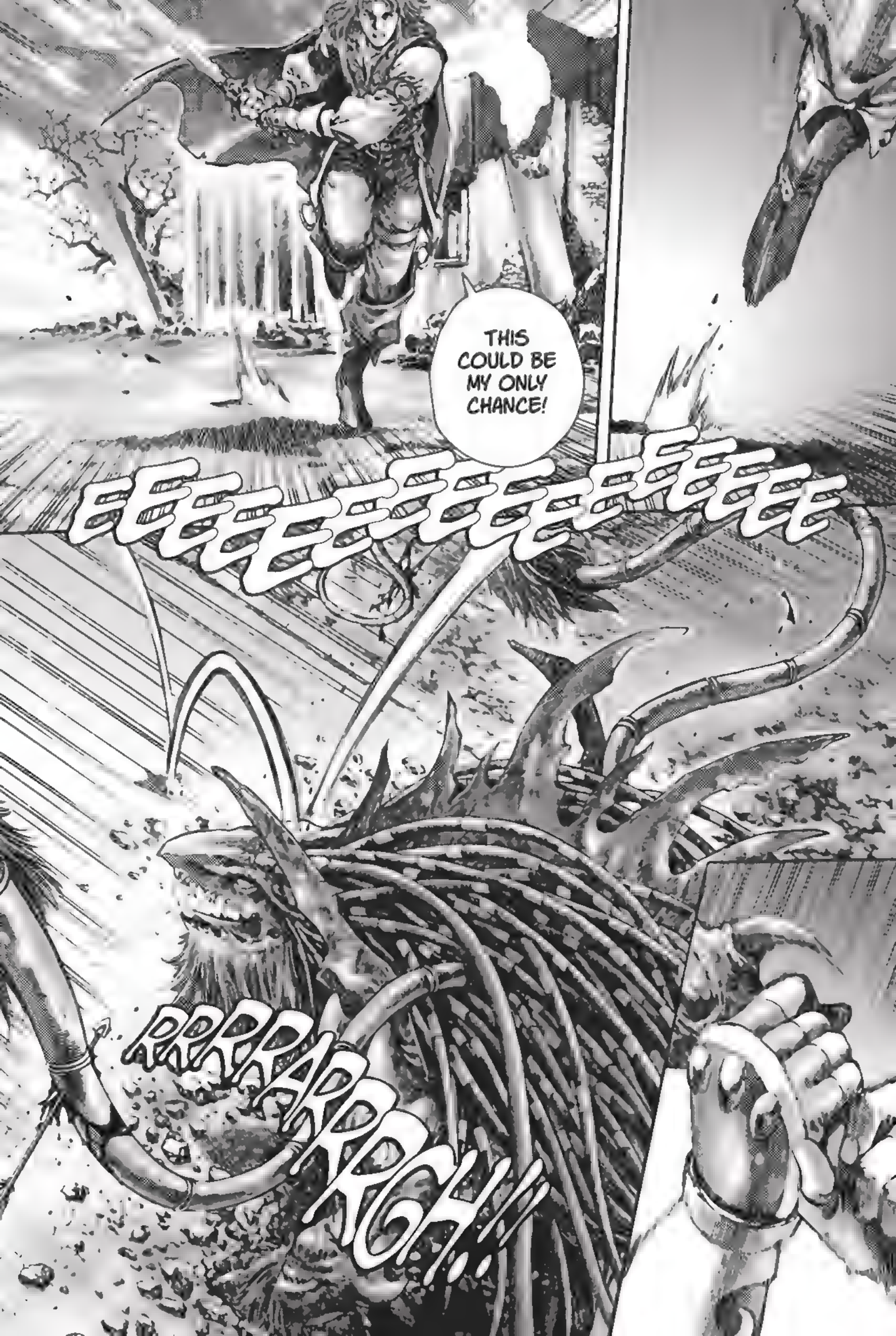
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
!!!
HER!
RRRAUGH!!

RRRARRRGH!!
EEEEEEEEEEEE
AAAAHHH!!

EEEE

UMMPH!
THUD
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
MY LADY?

THWUK
THWUK
THWUK
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
RRRARGH!!
!!!
THAT SCREAM! SOMEHOW, IT KEEPS THE BEAST'S MAGIC FROM HEALING IT!

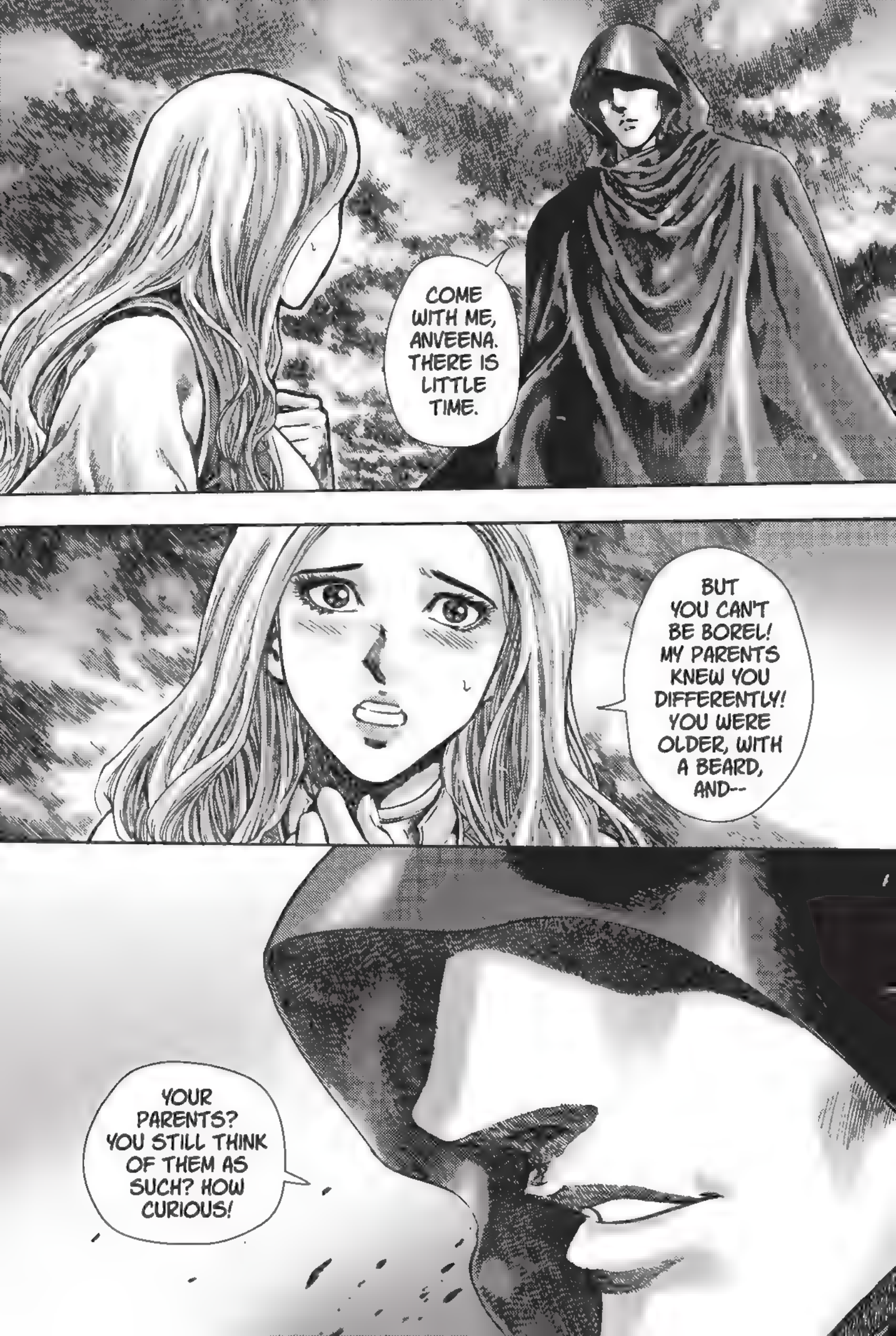

THIS COULD BE MY ONLY CHANCE!
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
RRRRARRGH!!

HAH!
SLAASSH
HNH!
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
WOOSH
THE BEAST IS SLOWING!

HAH!
RRRARGH!!
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
SHUNKK

HUFF HUFF
THE SCREAM! I-IT STOPPED!
SOMEONE'S OUT THERE! C-COULD THEY BE--
TYRI! JORAD!
RAAC!
UNNH...

WHAT? YOU AGAIN?
EVER AT YOUR SERVICE, MY LADY...
HMMPH... WELL, THANK YOU...
...NOT THAT I NEEDED *YOUR* HELP.
HA! IF YOU TWO ARE ALL RIGHT, THEN I SUGGEST--
I SUGGEST YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS SURRENDER YOURSELVES OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES, OUTSIDER!


COME WITH ME, ANVEENA. THERE IS LITTLE TIME.
BUT YOU CAN'T BE BOREL! MY PARENTS KNEW YOU DIFFERENTLY! YOU WERE OLDER, WITH A BEARD, AND--
YOUR PARENTS? YOU STILL THINK OF THEM AS SUCH? HOW CURIOUS!

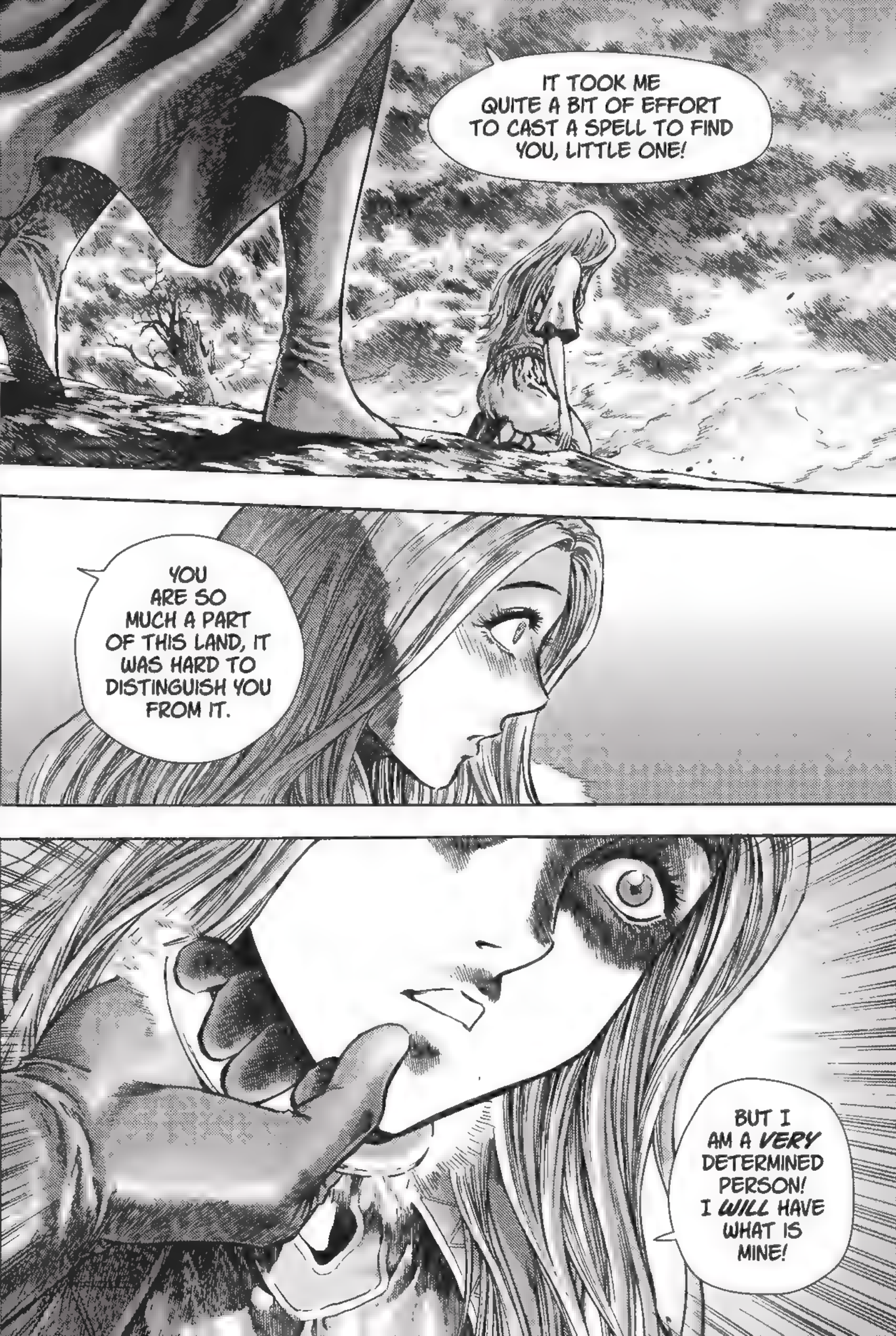
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? OF COURSE, THEY WERE MY PARENTS!
THEY LOVED ME! THEY RAISED ME!
BUT THEY WERE NOT REAL, ANVEENA! I CREATED THEM TO HELP HIDE THE TRUTH ABOUT YOU! TO KEEP THE SECRET HIDDEN UNTIL THE TIME WAS RIGHT!
NO! I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING!
YOU'RE SPEAKING NONSENSE!

LISTEN! THE RE-GATHERING OF SUCH POWER COULD NOT HELP BUT BE NOTICED BY THOSE OF BOTH SIDES! THAT WHICH YOU WERE UNDERSTOOD THIS AND AGREED TO THE CHARADE!
NO ONE WOULD SUSPECT A LITTLE GIRL AND HER DOTING PARENTS!
THEY WERE MY EYES AND EARS, AS THE CREATURE YOU CALL RAAC LATER BECAME!
IF THE SPELL I CAST TO MASK THE TRUTH FROM YOU BEGAN TO UNRAVEL, THEY WERE TO LET ME KNOW!
WHEN THE SCOURGE CAME, YOUR PARENTS' USEFULNESS WAS AT AN END! THEY CEASED TO BE AS THE FLAMES TOOK THE HOUSE!
NOW COME, ANVEENA! FORGET THEM! THEY WERE NOT REAL AND SO FELT NO PAIN! WE WILL BEGIN ANEW--

NO!
KHOOM

THUD
GASP!
IT'S NOT TRUE! NOT TRUE! HE'S MAD!
THEY WERE MY PARENTS! THEY WERE REAL!
SOB SOB

REAL...
NO.
HE WASN'T LYING! I REMEMBER! I--
SO, THERE YOU ARE!

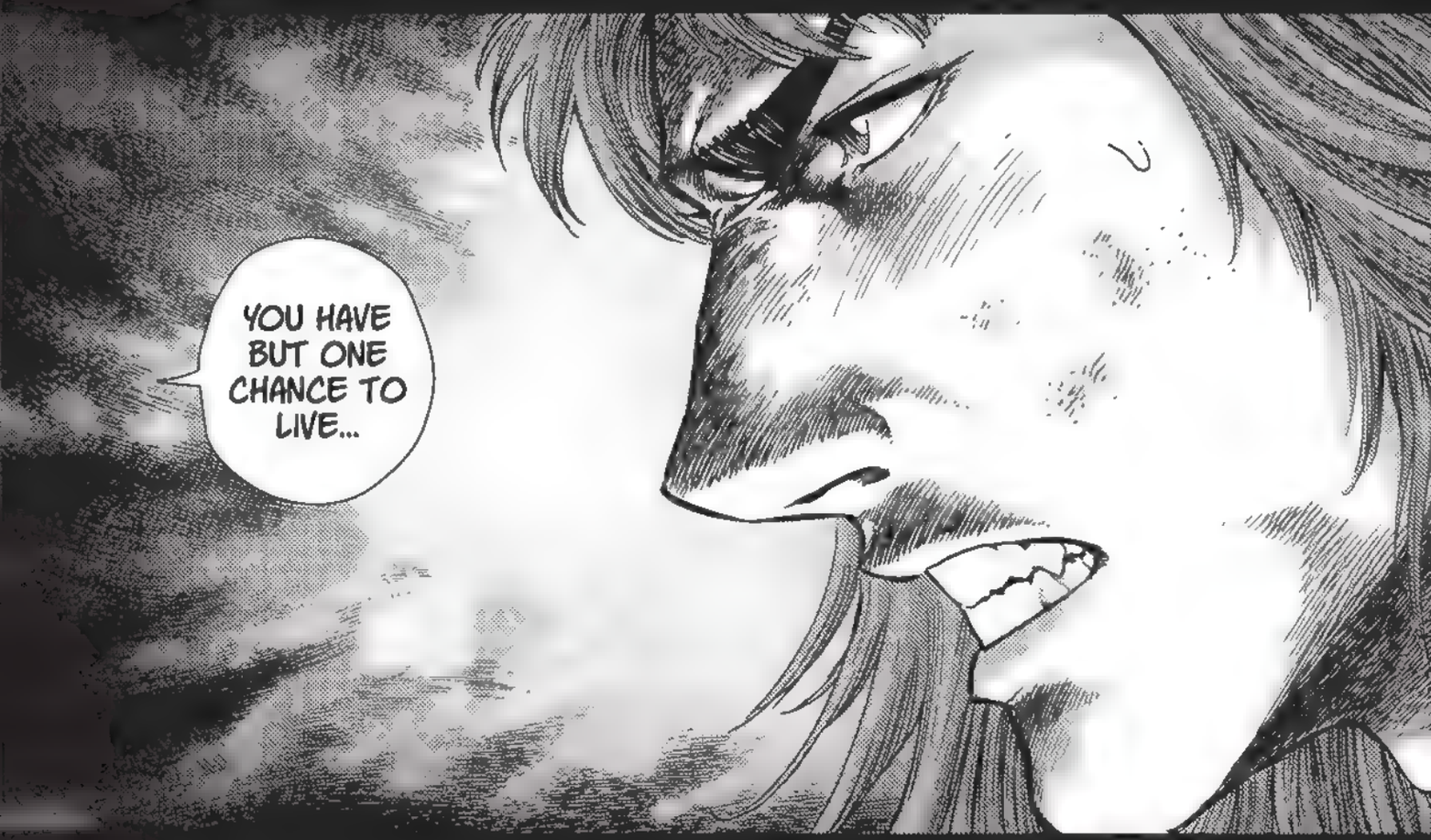

IT TOOK ME QUITE A BIT OF EFFORT TO CAST A SPELL TO FIND YOU, LITTLE ONE!
YOU ARE SO MUCH A PART OF THIS LAND, IT WAS HARD TO DISTINGUISH YOU FROM IT.
BUT I AM A *VERY* DETERMINED PERSON! I *WILL* HAVE WHAT IS MINE!

MINE... NOT KEL'THUZAD'S... NOT EVEN... NOT EVEN...
YES...NOT EVEN MY LORD ARTHAS!
RISE, LITTLE ONE...

THE NEW SPELL I CAST UPON YOUR COLLAR SHOULD HOLD YOU LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO TRANSFER YOUR ESSENCE, YOUR POWER, TO ME! WITH IT, I WILL BE A GOD!
I MUST COMPLIMENT YOU, BY THE WAY! AN EXCELLENT DISPLAY! IT ENTICES ME WITH THE THOUGHT OF WHAT I WILL DO WHEN THE MAGIC IS MINE TO COMMAND!
AND IT GIVES ME A GRAND IDEA...

...FOR DEALING WITH YOUR COMPANIONS ONCE AND FOR ALL!

CHAPTER FOUR
DARK REUNION



TELL US WHERE THE BANSHEE HIDES NOW! TELL US WHERE SYLVANAS IS!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT--AND WE'RE NOT YOUR ENEMIES! WE MEAN NO HARM!
NO ONE COMES TO THIS PLACE ANYMORE WITHOUT A VERY GOOD REASON!
AND YOU CANNOT DENY HER CALL JUST NOW! ONLY HER CRY'S MAGIC COULD HAVE HELPED WEAKEN THE SORCERY SURROUNDING THAT ABOMINATION ENOUGH FOR YOU TO SLAY IT!
WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT A BANSHEE, I TELL YOU! WE'RE HERE AFTER OUR FRIEND!
AND WHO WOULD BE SO MAD AS TO VENTURE TO THESE CURSED LANDS?

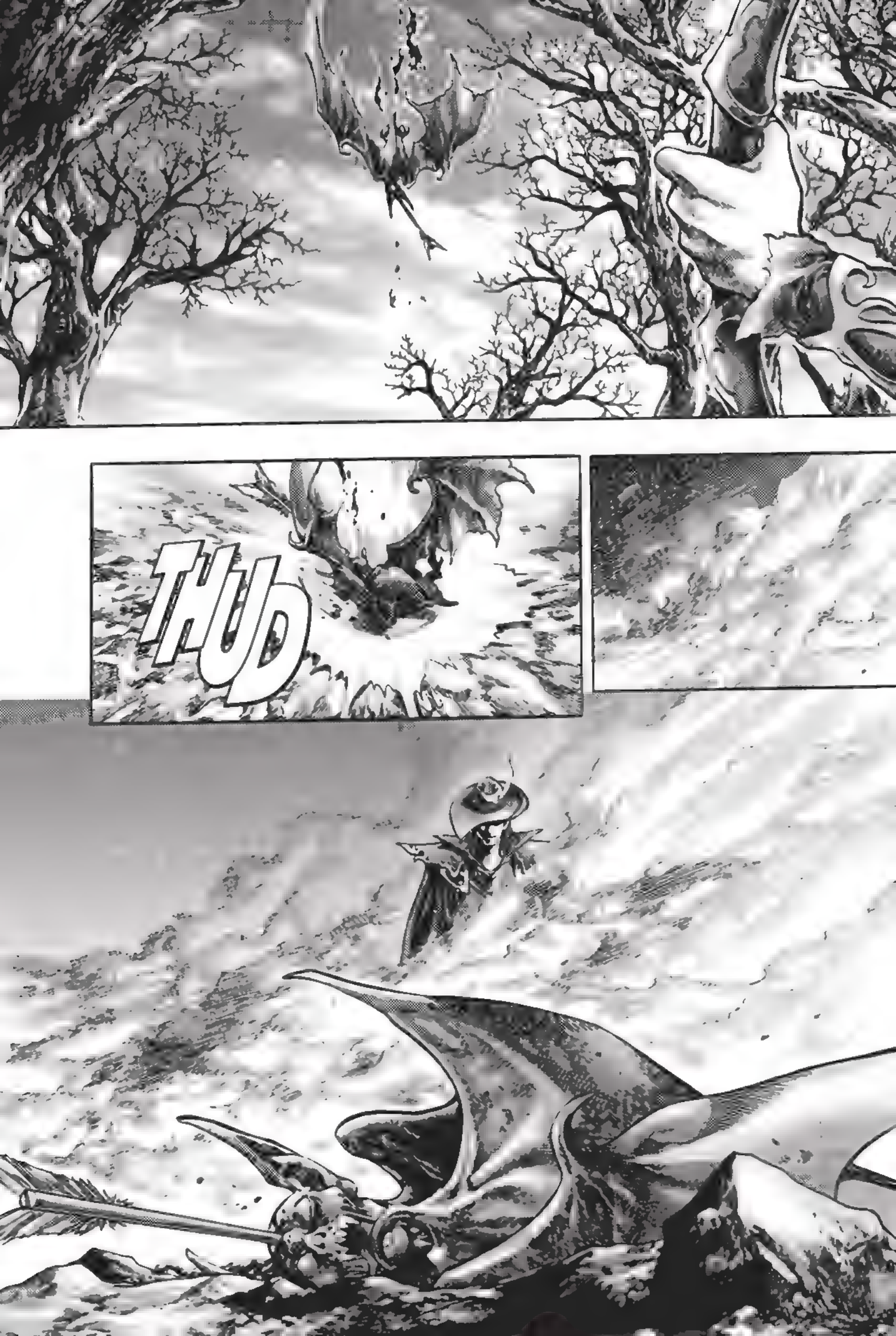
SHE'S A PRISONER OF ONE OF YOUR OWN! HIS NAME IS DAR'KHAN!
DAR'KHAN? WHAT IS YOUR FRIEND'S LINK TO THAT FOUL TRAITOR?
HE THINKS THAT SHE'S BOUND TO A GREAT FORCE THAT HE HOPES TO WIELD! YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF IT--
--I BELIEVE YOU CALLED IT THE SUNWELL.

YOU ARE MAD! THE SUNWELL IS NO MORE-- DAR'KHAN IS AT FAULT FOR ITS DESTRUCTION!
BUT HE MAY KNOW HOW TO SUMMON ITS MAGIC AGAIN... AND ALTHOUGH WE'RE TRYING TO SAVE OUR FRIEND--
--IF DAR'KHAN SUCCEEDS, SHE'LL BE ONLY THE FIRST OF MANY TO SUFFER!
YOU WILL NOT SUFFER... MUCH, LITTLE ONE.

AFTER ALL, YOU WERE NEVER REAL, ANYWAY!
MERELY A MASK OF SORTS CONCEALING A MOST POWERFUL FORCE...
A SIMPLE SHELL, ACTING ALIVE BUT NOT!
SCRAUGH!
TRULY, A SPELL BY A MASTER, BUT ONE THAT-- EH?

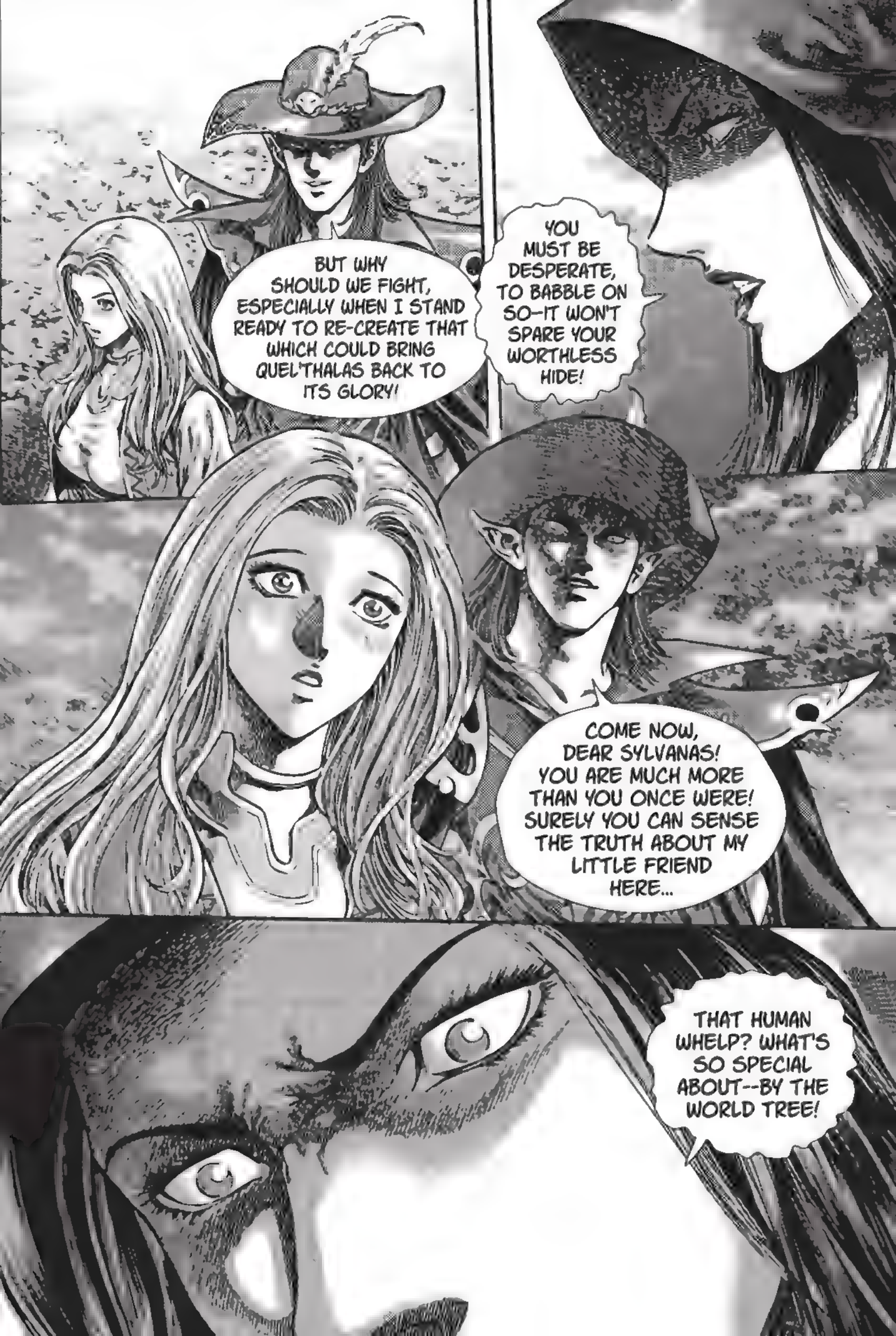
FLAP
FLAP
SCRAUGH!

SKREEEE
THWANG
THWUK
SKRE...


THUD

AAAH! I WAS WONDERING WHERE YOU MIGHT BE!
THIS TRULY WOULD NOT BE THE SAME WITHOUT YOU...
SPARE ME YOUR GLIBNESS, DAR'KHAN...
I HAVE COME TO FINISH WHAT WAS LEFT UNFINISHED...
YOUR DEATH IS MINE, HAS ALWAYS BEEN MINE...

BUT WHY SHOULD YOU STILL FEEL SUCH ENMITY, DEAR SYLVANAS? AFTER ALL, WE ARE BOTH ON THE SAME SIDE NOW...
WE WILL NEVER BE ON THE SAME SIDE, DAR'KHAN! AND I DID NOT CHOOSE TO BE WHAT I AM...
...UNLIKE YOU, WHO CHOSE SO WILLINGLY TO BETRAY ALL OUR PEOPLE!
I'VE WAITED LONG FOR THIS...
GO AHEAD AND TRY TO CAST A SPELL! YOU KNOW MY CRY WILL CANCEL IT OUT LONG ENOUGH FOR MY BOLTS TO PIERCE YOUR BLACK HEART!

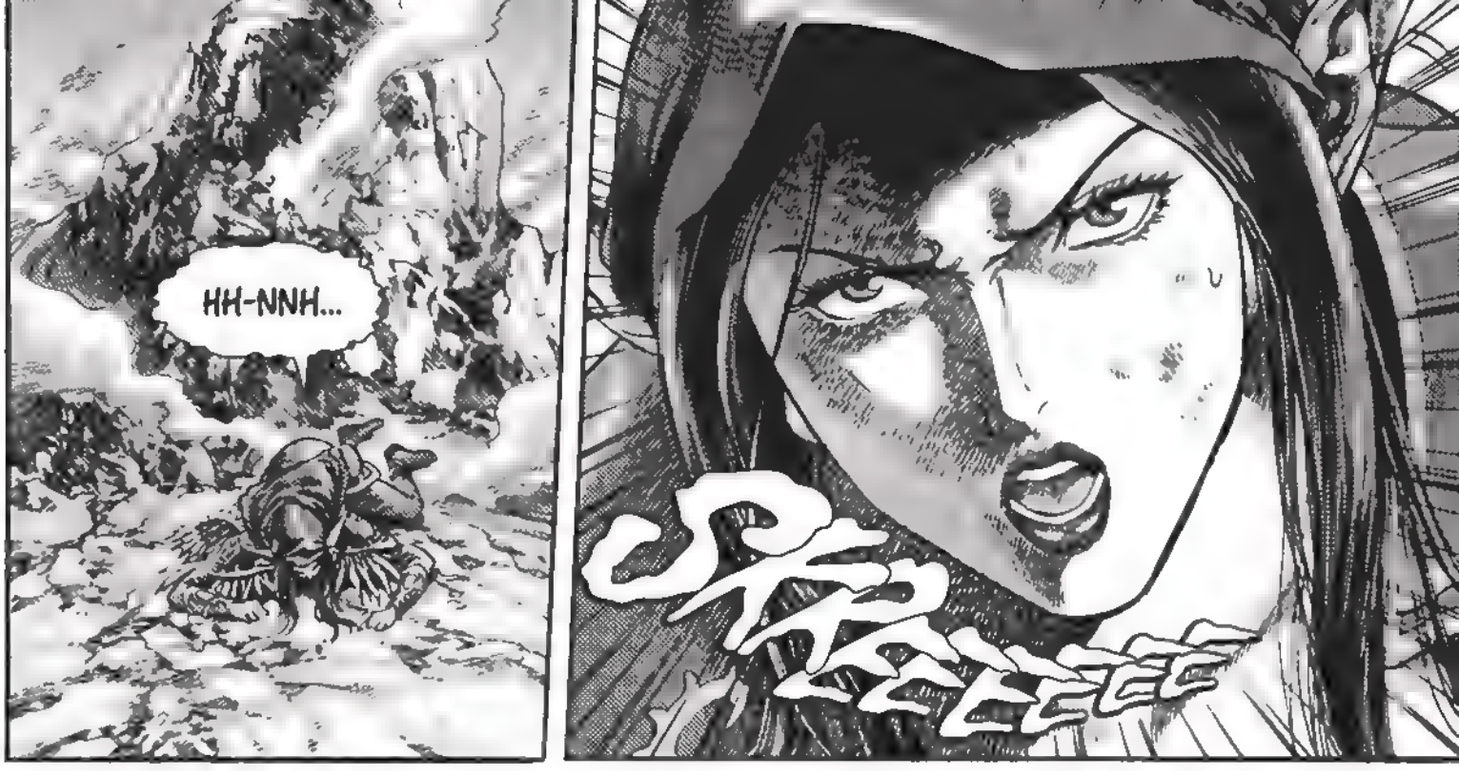

BUT WHY SHOULD WE FIGHT, ESPECIALLY WHEN I STAND READY TO RE-CREATE THAT WHICH COULD BRING QUEL'THALAS BACK TO ITS GLORY!
YOU MUST BE DESPERATE, TO BABBLE ON SO--IT WON'T SPARE YOUR WORTHLESS HIDE!
COME NOW, DEAR SYLVANAS! YOU ARE MUCH MORE THAN YOU ONCE WERE! SURELY YOU CAN SENSE THE TRUTH ABOUT MY LITTLE FRIEND HERE...
THAT HUMAN WHELP? WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT--BY THE WORLD TREE!

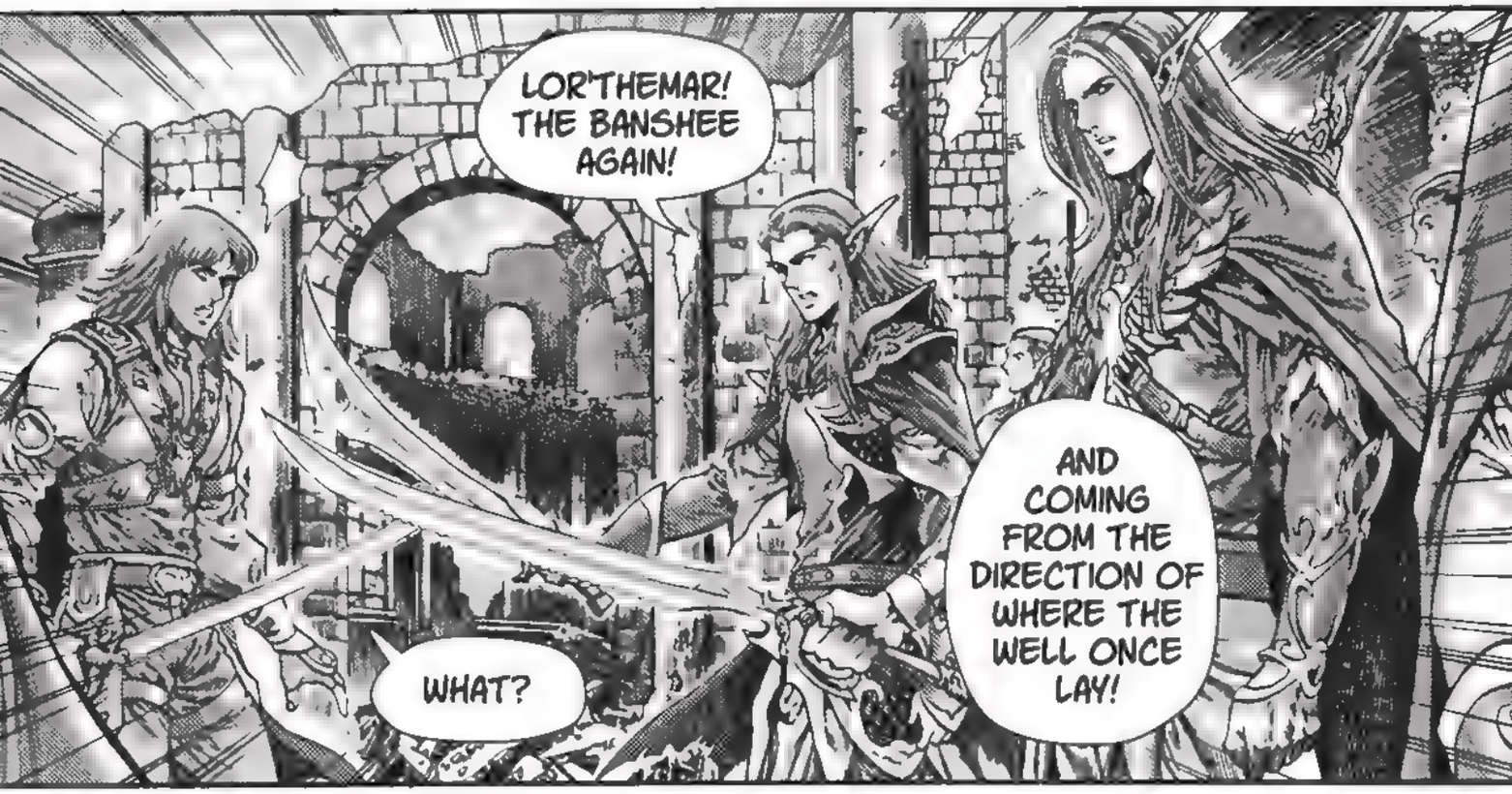
SHE-- SHE CANNOT BE--
THAT LITTLE WHELP CANNOT HOLD IN HER THE ESSENCE OF THE BLESSED SUNWELL!
IT IS A REMARKABLE BIT OF DECEPTION, ISN'T IT? WHO WOULD SUSPECT?
BUT THE POINT IS, NOW I HAVE HER AND I WILL RESTORE HER TO WHAT SHE TRULY IS.
AND AFTERWARD, NOBLY RETURN OUR HOMELAND TO ITS PRISTINE PERFECTION? I DOUBT THAT OF YOU, BETRAYER!

BUT I... I WILL MAKE PROPER USE OF HER...AFTER YOU ARE DEAD!
POOR, DEAR SYLVANAS! SO NAIVE, SO EASILY... DISTRACTED.
SO SIMPLE TO OUTMANEUVER!
WHO?!
!!!

SKEEEE
BWAM
SSSHUMP
THOM

UNGH...
DAMN YOU!
AAARGH!
WHOOP
AHAHAHA!


HH-NNH...
SHRIEK


LOR'THEMAR! THE BANSHEE AGAIN!
WHAT?
AND COMING FROM THE DIRECTION OF WHERE THE WELL ONCE LAY!

THAT'S WHERE DAR'KHAN WOULD'VE TAKEN ANVEENA! YOU MUST SHOW US WHERE IT IS!
I MUST DO NOTHING FOR YOU! A HALF-BLOOD'S DEMANDS MEAN NOTHING!

I'M NO HALF-ELF! I AM A BLUE DRAGON, A SERVANT OF MALYGOS!
A DRAGON? YOU ARE MAD!
IF I COULD JUST REMOVE THIS CURSED COLLAR, I COULD PROVE IT!
SUCH A TRAGEDY! IF YOU WERE A DRAGON, THEN WE WOULD CERTAINLY TAKE YOUR TALE SERIOUSLY, HALF-BLOOD!
WELL, IF THAT IS ALL IT WILL TAKE TO PUT AN END TO THIS USELESS BICKERING...

THEN ALLOW ME--
--TO ENLIGHTEN YOU--
--TO THE FACTS!

WHAT DO YOU SAY?
GREAT ONE, FORGIVE ME FOR MY DISBELIEF! I MEANT NO DISRESPECT TO YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS!
BUT THAT DOES NOT CHANGE THE FACT THAT THERE IS NOT ONLY DAR'KHAN TO CONSIDER, BUT ALSO SYLVANAS!
JUST WHO IS THIS SYLVANAS? WHERE DOES THIS BANSHEE COME FROM?
SYLVANAS WAS ONCE A CHAMPION OF QUEL'THALAS, A DEFENDER OF THE SUNWELL LIKE MYSELF!

SHE WAS RANGER GENERAL DURING THE WAR AGAINST THE SCOURGE! AT THE LAST STAND AT SILVERMOON--OUR CAPITAL--SHE LED THE DESPERATE DEFENDERS...
...BUT EVEN HER BRAVERY WAS NOT ENOUGH TO STAVE THE INEVITABLE!
WE THOUGHT HER DEAD WITH THE REST...
WOULD THAT, FOR HER SAKE AND OURS, WE HAD BEEN CORRECT!

IT IS SAID THAT SHE WAS BROUGHT, BARELY ALIVE, BEFORE THE BETRAYER, ARTHAS...
HE HAD WHAT WAS LEFT OF THAT LIFE RIPPED FROM HER...
...BUT WHEN SHE FINALLY DIED, HE COULD NOT BE SATISFIED WITH THAT!

HE TOOK HER RAVAGED BODY AND CAST UNHOLY SPELLS UPON IT!
CREATING FROM WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN GOOD A THING OF EVIL!
HE TWISTED THE SOUL OF SYLVANAS WINDRUNNER--
--AND TURNED HER INTO THE BANSHEE SHE IS NOW!

SHE SERVED ARTHAS FOR A TIME IN HIS EVIL, THEN REBELLED AGAINST HIM IN ORDER TO TAKE ON HER OWN DARK CAUSE!
AND WITH DAR'KHAN HERE, I CAN ONLY FEAR THAT SHE HAS PLANS OF HER OWN FOR THE SUNWELL!
DO YOU THINK THAT THEY'RE ALLIED WITH ONE ANOTHER?
NO, SHE WOULD PREFER DAR'KHAN DEAD, FOR HIS RUINATION OF THE SUNWELL PLAYED A PART IN HER DOWNFALL AND CORRUPTION. FOR THAT, SHE WILL EVER HATE HIM...
NO, SURELY IT IS DAR'KHAN WHO MUST FEAR SYLVANAS MORE THAN US...
I HOPE YOU FIND YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, DEAR SYLVANAS...

I HAVE GIVEN YOU THE BEST POSSIBLE VIEW OF WHAT IS TO COME--
EVEN IF IT DOES MEAN THAT WHEN IT CULMINATES, YOU WILL DIE... AGAIN!

CHAPTER FIVE
EDGE OF THE ABYSS

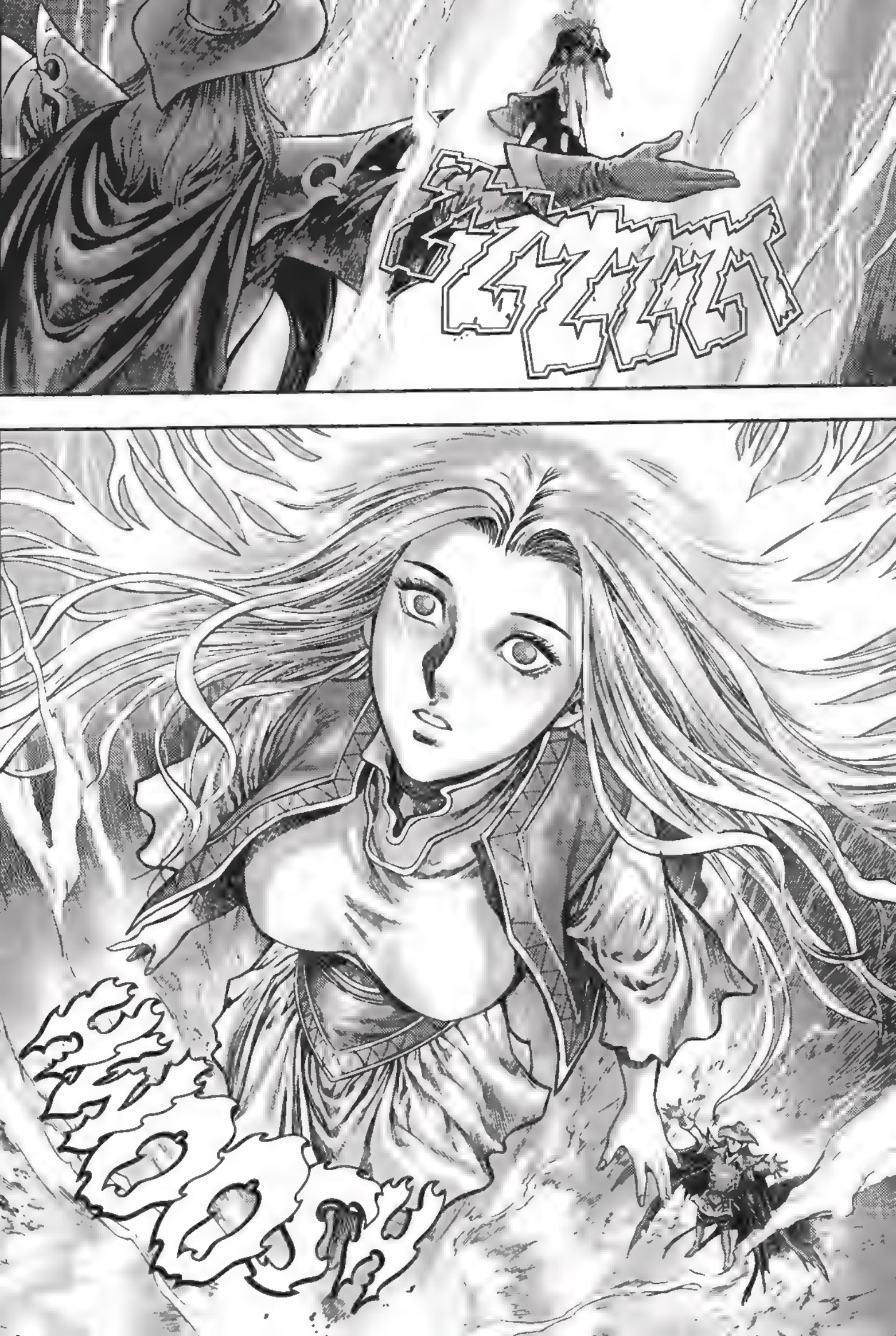
ALL THAT REMAINS OF THE GLORY THAT WAS ONCE QUEL'THALAS...

THE GROVE OF THE SUNWELL...

BUT THIS AREA IS HUGE! IF WE LAND WHERE YOU SAY, WE'LL STILL BE FAR FROM ANVEENA!
WE DARE NOT LAND NEARER! DAR'KHAN MUST NOT KNOW OF OUR PRESENCE!
I SEND US AS NEAR AS POSSIBLE!
THE TRAITOR WILL BE THERE! FOR UNDER THE WORST OF THE MIST IS THE PLACE WHERE THE SUNWELL ITSELF ONCE LAY!
I DON'T CARE ANYTHING ABOUT THE SUNWELL! ALL THAT MATTERS IS ANVEENA...
BUT DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND YET? I NOW DO!

SHE IS THE SUNWELL!
THE POWER SHALL BE UNLEASHED AGAIN, POWER THIS TIME UNDER MY UTTER CONTROL!
AND EVEN YOU WILL PLAY A PART IN MY ASCENSION, DEAR SYLVANAS--
BUT ENOUGH TALK! COME, MY LITTLE ONE...IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO SHED THIS UNWORTHY SKIN...

...AND BE RESTORED TO YOUR FULL GLORY!
!!!
AHAHAHA!



KALEC! LOOK!
HE'S BEGUN ALREADY!
WE'RE NOT COVERING THE DISTANCE QUICKLY ENOUGH! WE SHOULD'VE FLOWN IN AND TAKEN OUR CHANCES!
MAYHAPS, TYRI AND I COULD-- WHAT IN-- ???

SLAASSH
UNGH!
THEY'RE EVERYWHERE!
MORE OF DAR'KHAN'S FOUL WORK! I FEAR I HAVE LED US AWRY! BY THE TIME WE FIGHT OUR WAY THROUGH THESE, IT WILL BE TOO LATE!
CLANG
THEN WHY WASTE OUR TIME ON THE LIKES OF THESE AT ALL?

GRRRR
RRRRR...

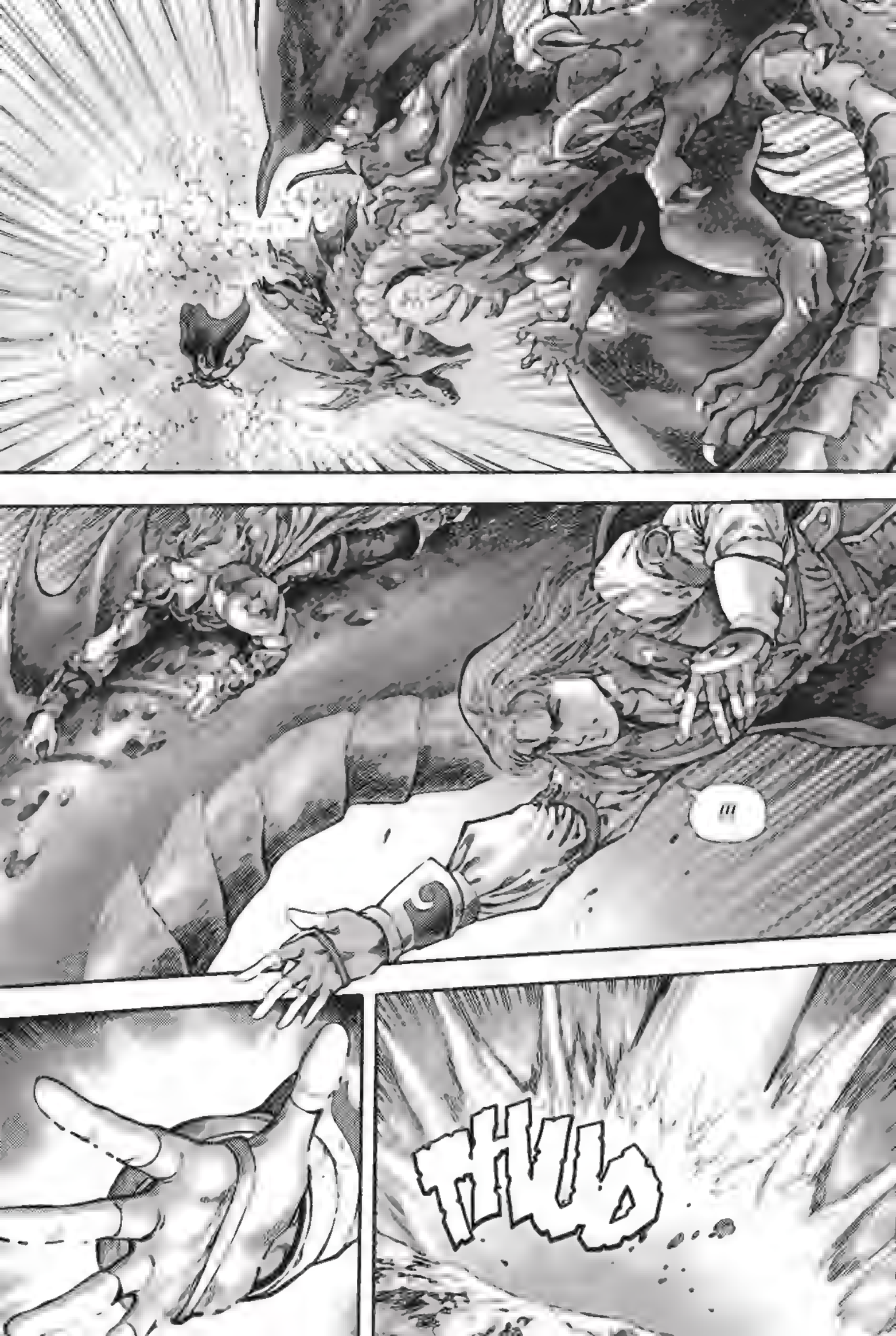
SSSSSSS
NOW, WAS THAT NOT QUICKER?
QUICKER, BUT NOW DAR'KHAN SURELY KNOWS WE'RE HERE! WE CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS!
TYRI! YOU NEED TO CHANGE AGAIN!
I WONDERED WHEN YOU WOULD SEE REASON!
SPARE ME THE JESTS AND HURRY!

LOR'THEMAR! WHAT'RE YOU WAITING FOR?
AH!
HALDURON AND THE OTHERS HAVE NEARLY CAUGHT UP! I WILL COME WITH THEM! YOU GO ON AHEAD!
ALL RIGHT! LET'S GO, TYRI!
HOLD TIGHT, THEN!

I SHOULD'VE LISTENED TO MYSELF! WE WASTED VALUABLE TIME!
WHOOOSH
COURAGE, KALEC! WE WILL REACH HER IN TIME!
IF ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO ANVEENA-
WILL WE? LOOK AT THAT! WHATEVER DAR'KHAN'S CASTING COVERS THAT WHOLE GAP!
IT HAS TO-- WAIT! WHAT'S THAT ABOVE THE CRATER?

IT CAN'T BE-- BUT IT IS! IT'S HER!
ANVEENA! ANVEENA!
SHE DOESN'T HEAR ME!

NO MATTER! I'M NEARLY UPON HER!
TYRI! NO!
ALL I NEED DO IS GENTLY PLUCK HER FREE--
RRRAUGH!!!
KRAK!
GGGG


!!!
THUD

CLATTER
WHOOOO
SCRAPE

UNNGH...
DAR'KHAN!
I SWEAR, YOU WON'T ESCAPE ME THIS TIME...

PERFECT! PERFECT! I CAN SENSE THE SPELLS CONTAINING THE SUNWELL'S ENERGY FAILING!
AND NOW, MY DEAR SYLVANAS, IT IS TIME WE PUT YOUR GLORIOUS ABILITIES TO WORK TO FINISH THE-- HMM?
SO! OUR WOULD-BE HERO!
I SHOULD LEAVE YOU TO ANOTHER, BUT WHY WASTE SUCH FORCE ON THE LIKES OF YOU...

AAAUGH!
...WHEN YOUR PATHETIC ATTEMPT AT RESCUE CAN BE THWARTED WITH MERELY A GESTURE?
UNNNGH!
HMM... A BIT MORE DEFIANT, EH? HOW ADMIRABLE, IF FUTILE.
YOU CANNOT RESIST THE COLLAR'S POWER! MY POWER!
GIVE IN TO IT! GIVE IN TO THE INEVITABLE...

UNNN.... HYAA!
FWOOSH
HOW PATHETIC...
WHOOMP
MMMPH!
NNNNGH...

YOU WERE TOO LATE EVEN BEFORE YOU ARRIVED, MY FOOLISH FRIEND. THE SPELL IS WELL UNDER WAY. YOU CANNOT STOP IT.
ALREADY, THE POWER OF THE SUNWELL FLOWS TO ME EVEN THOUGH THE SHELL HAS NOT COMPLETELY DISSIPATED YET!
BUT THAT SITUATION SHOULD NOT LAST MUCH LONGER, FROM WHAT I SEE!
THEN... THEN I SHALL BECOME AS A GOD TO AZEROTH! NO ONE ELSE DESERVES ITS POWER MORE THAN I!

NO MORE WILL I BE TWISTED OR FORCED TO BOW TO THE POWER OF ANOTHER!
I SHALL MAKE EVEN MY DEAR LORD ARTHAS KNEEL TO ME!
MY POWER SHALL SPREAD BEYOND AZEROTH, TO REALMS MERELY WHISPERED OF!
IT WILL BE GLORIOUS!
IT'LL... BE... A MADNESS...

A MADNESS... YOU'LL NEVER SEE... COME TRUE!
SKREEEEE
UNNGH... HA!
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
MMMPH!
FWOOOM

FOOLS! THROUGH WHAT I HAVE TAPPED THROUGH HER, I AM ALREADY FAR MORE THAN I EVER WAS! YOUR ATTACKS ARE NOTHING TO ME NOW!
THEN, PERHAPS SOMETHING A BIT STRONGER--
--IS CALLED FOR, HMM?

AHH! BUT I HAVE PREPARED FOR YOU, TOO, MY DEAR!
THERE WILL BE NO REPEAT OF OUR LAST FIERY ENCOUNTER!
HIM? YOU THINK HE WILL FARE ANY BETTER AGAINST ME THAN YOU?
OH, YES, I DO, ACTUALLY!
IN FACT...

RRRAUGH!!!
I HAVE NO DOUBT WHATSOEVER

CHAPTER SIX

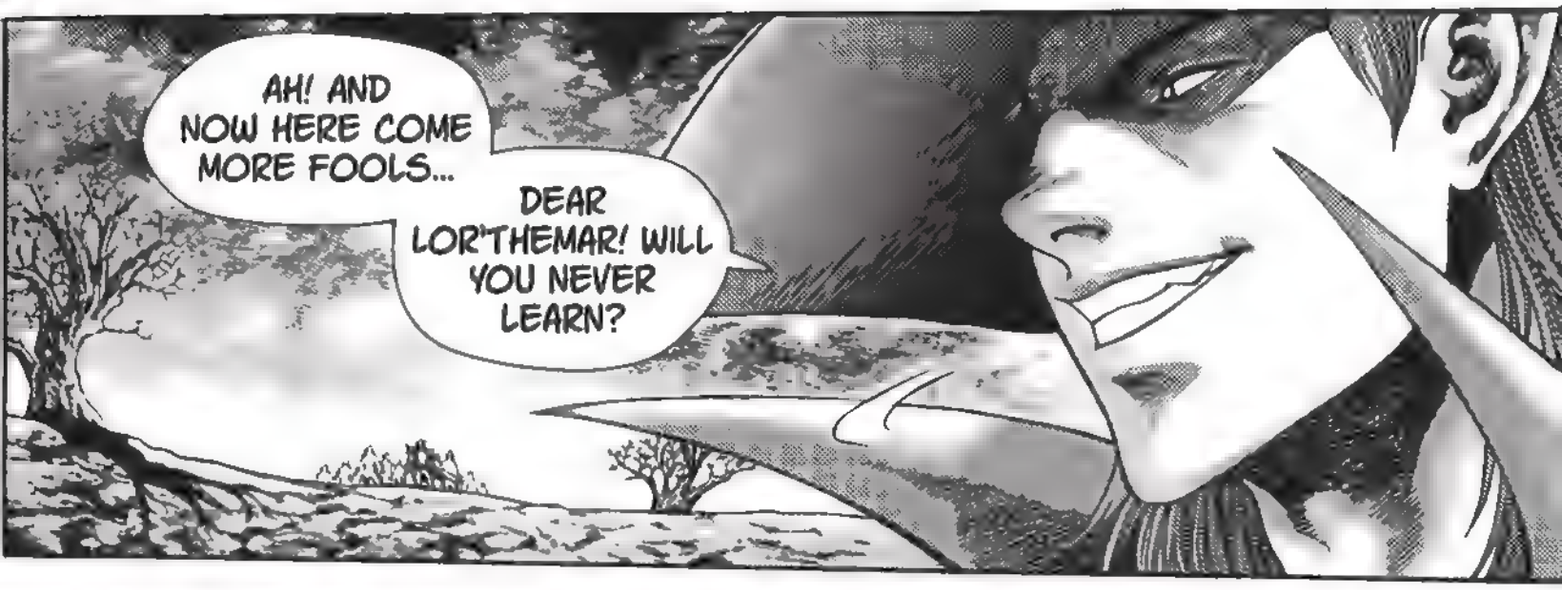
FIRE AND FURY

RRRRARRRGH!!

HISSSSSSS

RRRARGH!!
SSSST
THWUK

AHAHAHA!


AH! AND NOW HERE COME MORE FOOLS...
DEAR LOR'THEMAR! WILL YOU NEVER LEARN?

BY THE WELL!
WE MUST FIGHT OUR WAY THROUGH OR ALL IS LOST!

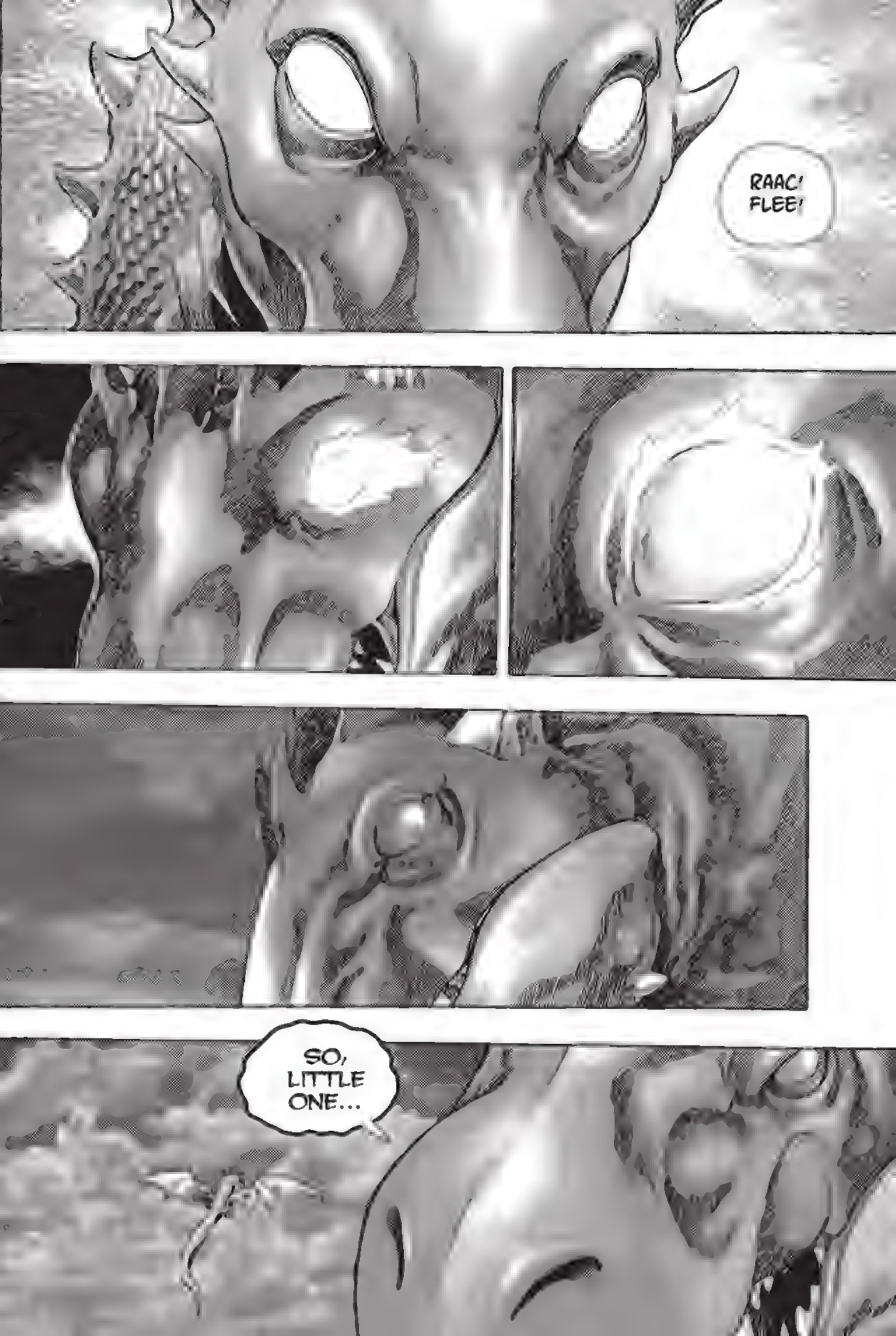
BUT ALL IS LOST, MY OLD FRIEND! YOU'VE FAILED, JUST AS YOU ALWAYS DO...
THERE ARE TOO MANY!
WE MUST NOT GIVE IN!
HE SWEEPS US ALL ASIDE AS IF WE'RE NOTHING! BUT THERE MUST BE SOME MANNER BY WHICH--
WHAT?
WOOSH
RAAC? WHAT'S HE DOING?

YES! HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO STIR ANVEENA FROM THE SPELL-
HE'S LEAVING HER!
WHAT DOES HE THINK HE'S DOING?
I CANT LET IT END LIKE THIS
I HAVE TO KEEP TRYING

HAVE TO FOR ANVEENA!
UNNGH! BREAK, DAMN YOU! BREAK!
I...CAN'T... WAIT FOR IT! I HAVE TO... STRIKE NOW!
DAR'KHAN!!!
RRRAUGH!!!

OH, SURELY YOU JEST!
YOU MUST BE TAUGHT ANOTHER LESSON!
AAARGH!
THWAM
THIS WILL BE THE LAST ONE, I PROMISE!
AFTER ALL, WHEN I AM DONE, THERE WILL NOT BE MUCH LEFT OF YOU!

RRROAR!
'TIS RAAC!
WOOOSH
WHAT DOES HE THINK HE CAN DO?
FLAP FLAP


RAAC! FLEE!
SO, LITTLE ONE...

...YOU HELPED FREE ME OF THE CURSED ONE'S SPELL, BUT I FEAR IT MAY BE ALL FOR NAUGHT!
WHO ARE YOU? WHY--?
THERE IS NO TIME FOR EXPLANATIONS!
BAAC!
A FEW MOMENTS MORE, AND HIS SPELL WILL BE IRREVERSIBLE! THERE IS PERHAPS ONE HOPE!
IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW MUCH REMAINS OF WHAT I THOUGHT MERELY A FACADE...

HURRY! YOU MUST STRIKE AT DAR'KHAN WITH ALL THAT YOU CAN MUSTER...
...EVEN THOUGH HE NOW HAS POWER ENOUGH TO SLAY YOU WITH BUT A GLANCE
AND YOU, LITTLE ONE... YOU MUST REACH HER...
...YOU MUST SHOW HER...

AND WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING?
I? I WILL BE WATCHING... WHICH IS LIKELY TO BE EITHER THE KEY TO OUR VICTORY...
OR THE FINAL ACT OF OUR BLOODY DEFEAT!
RRRARGH!!
NOW FLY! FLY AND FIGHT!

AHH... WHAT'S THIS?
YOUR FRIENDS HAVE COME TO DIE WITH YOU...
I SHALL BE ONLY TOO HAPPY TO OBLIGE THEM...
IT SEEKS TO SWALLOW US!
RRRRR...
MY MAGIC DOESN'T HOLD IT BACK!

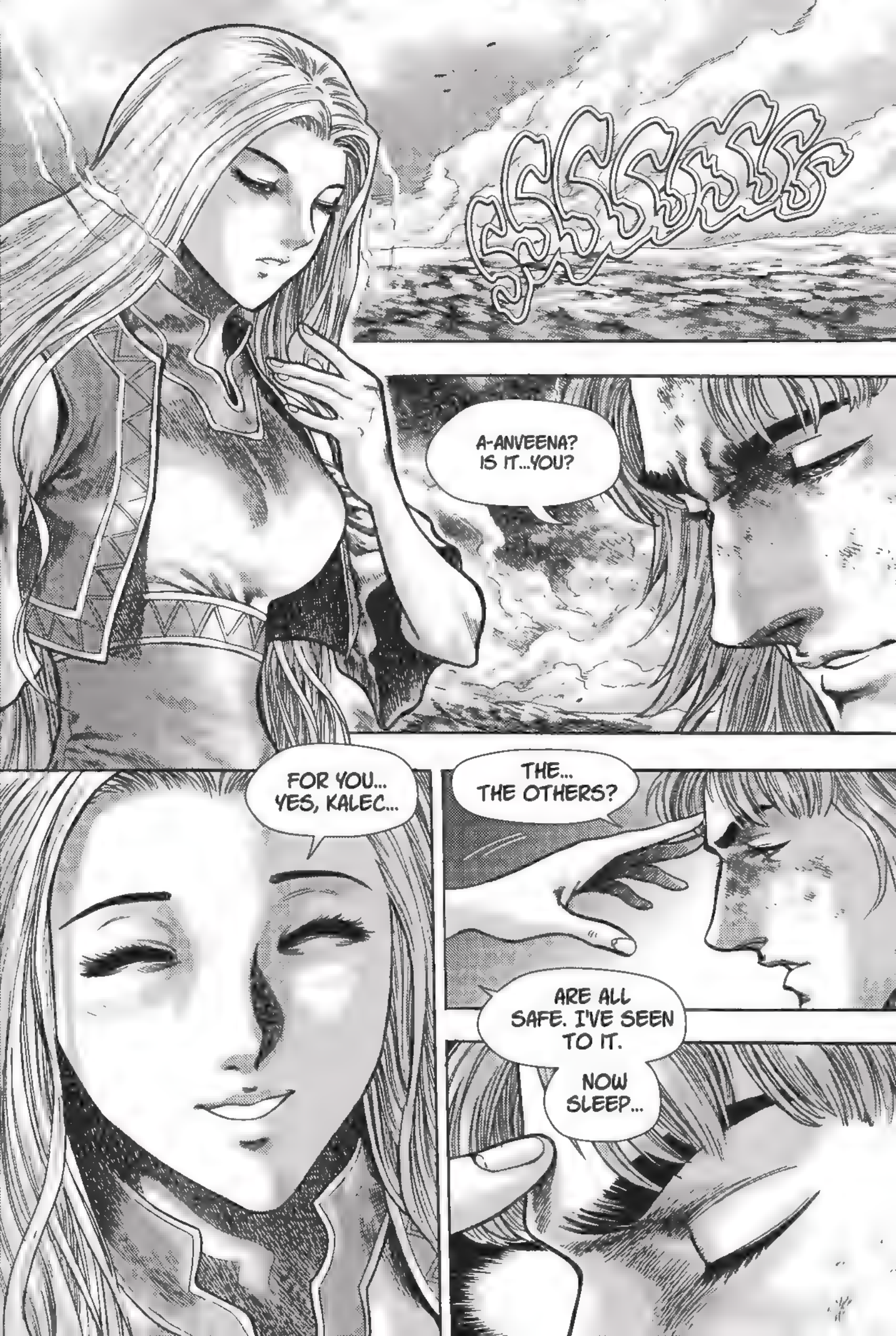
AND WHAT OF YOU? FROZEN IN FEAR, THIS TIME?
YES, YOU SHOULD FEAR! YOU ALL SHOULD FEAR!
RAAC! RAAC!
RAAC!
RAAC!

K KALEC
KALEC!

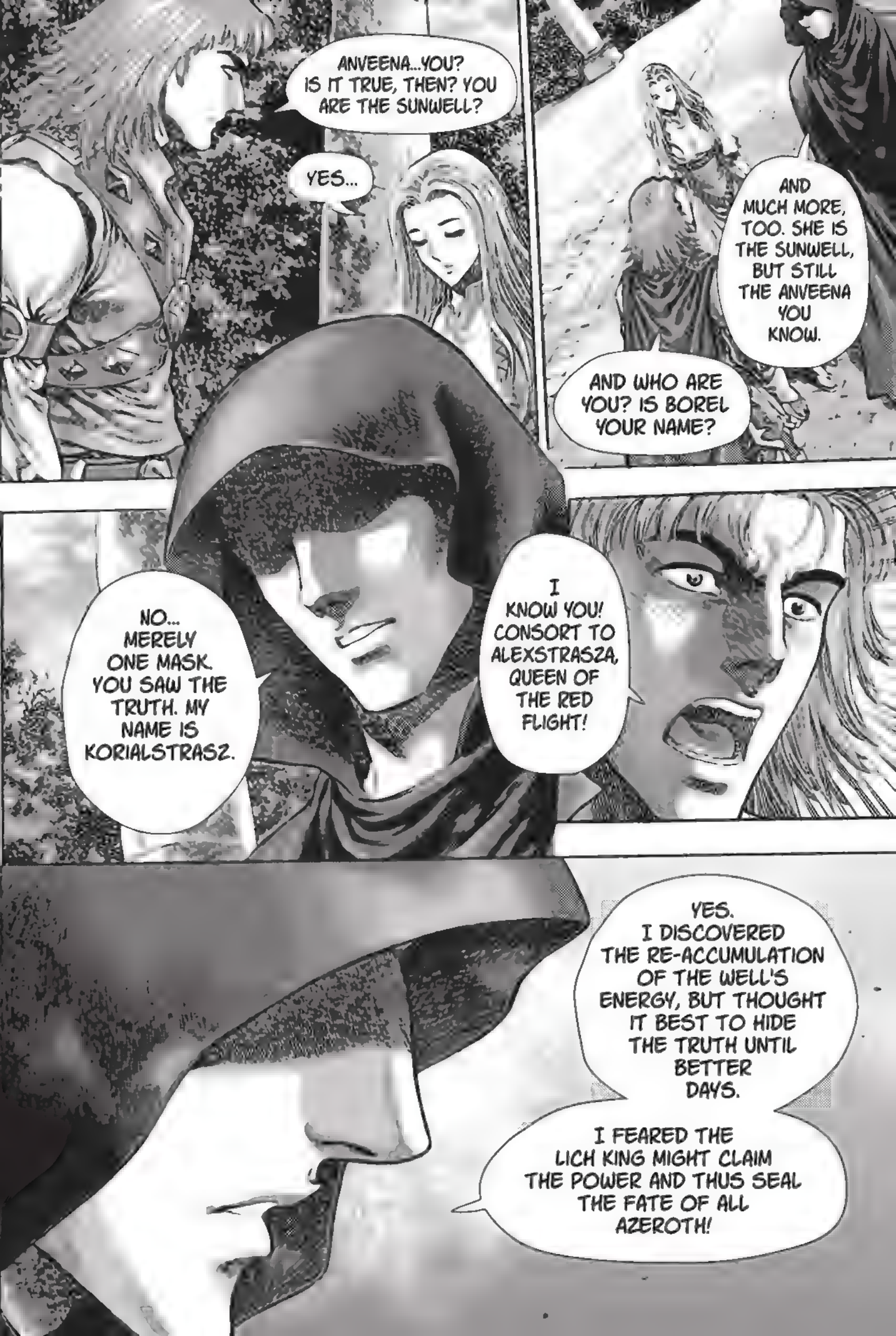
A-ANVE-VEENA?
YOU CLING YET TO THAT IMAGE? THAT LIE?
SHE IS NOT HUMAN! SHE IS NOTHING BUT A FOUNT OF PURE MAGIC! ALL ELSE ABOUT HER IS FALSE!
SHE IS THE SUNWELL!

YES... I AM THE SUNWELL... NOT ANVEENA... NOT HUMAN... ONLY GREAT POWER...
...AND SO... YOU...YOU HAVE NO HOLD ON ME...
...AND NO HOPE AGAINST ME.

AAAA

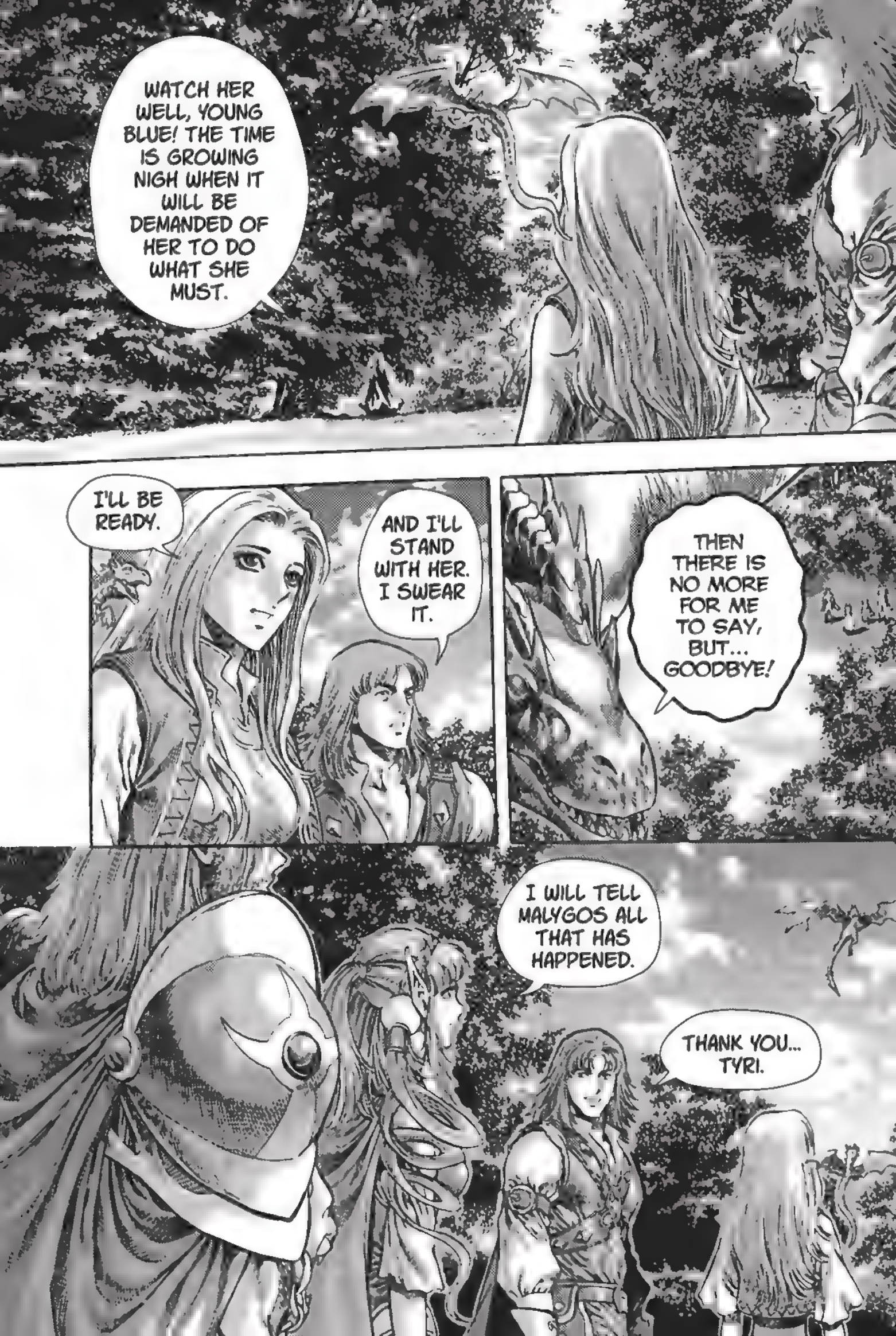

SSSSSSS
A-ANVEENA? IS IT...YOU?
FOR YOU... YES, KALEC...
THE... THE OTHERS?
ARE ALL SAFE. I'VE SEEN TO IT.
NOW SLEEP...

YOU ARE CERTAIN YOU WANT IT THIS WAY?
YES. THIS IS BEST, I THINK.
I WILL ABIDE BY YOUR DECISION, BUT THE OTHERS--AH, AND SPEAKING OF OUR BRAVE YOUNG BLUE! DO YOU FARE BETTER NOW?
I DO. IN FACT, I FEEL GREAT. I FEEL--
!!!
WHERE DID ALL THIS--


ANVEENA...YOU? IS IT TRUE, THEN? YOU ARE THE SUNWELL?
YES...
AND MUCH MORE, TOO. SHE IS THE SUNWELL, BUT STILL THE ANVEENA YOU KNOW.
AND WHO ARE YOU? IS BOREL YOUR NAME?
I KNOW YOU! CONSORT TO ALEXSTRASZA, QUEEN OF THE RED FLIGHT!
NO... MERELY ONE MASK. YOU SAW THE TRUTH. MY NAME IS KORIALSTRASZ.
YES. I DISCOVERED THE RE-ACCUMULATION OF THE WELL'S ENERGY, BUT THOUGHT IT BEST TO HIDE THE TRUTH UNTIL BETTER DAYS.
I FEARED THE LICH KING MIGHT CLAIM THE POWER AND THUS SEAL THE FATE OF ALL AZEROTH!

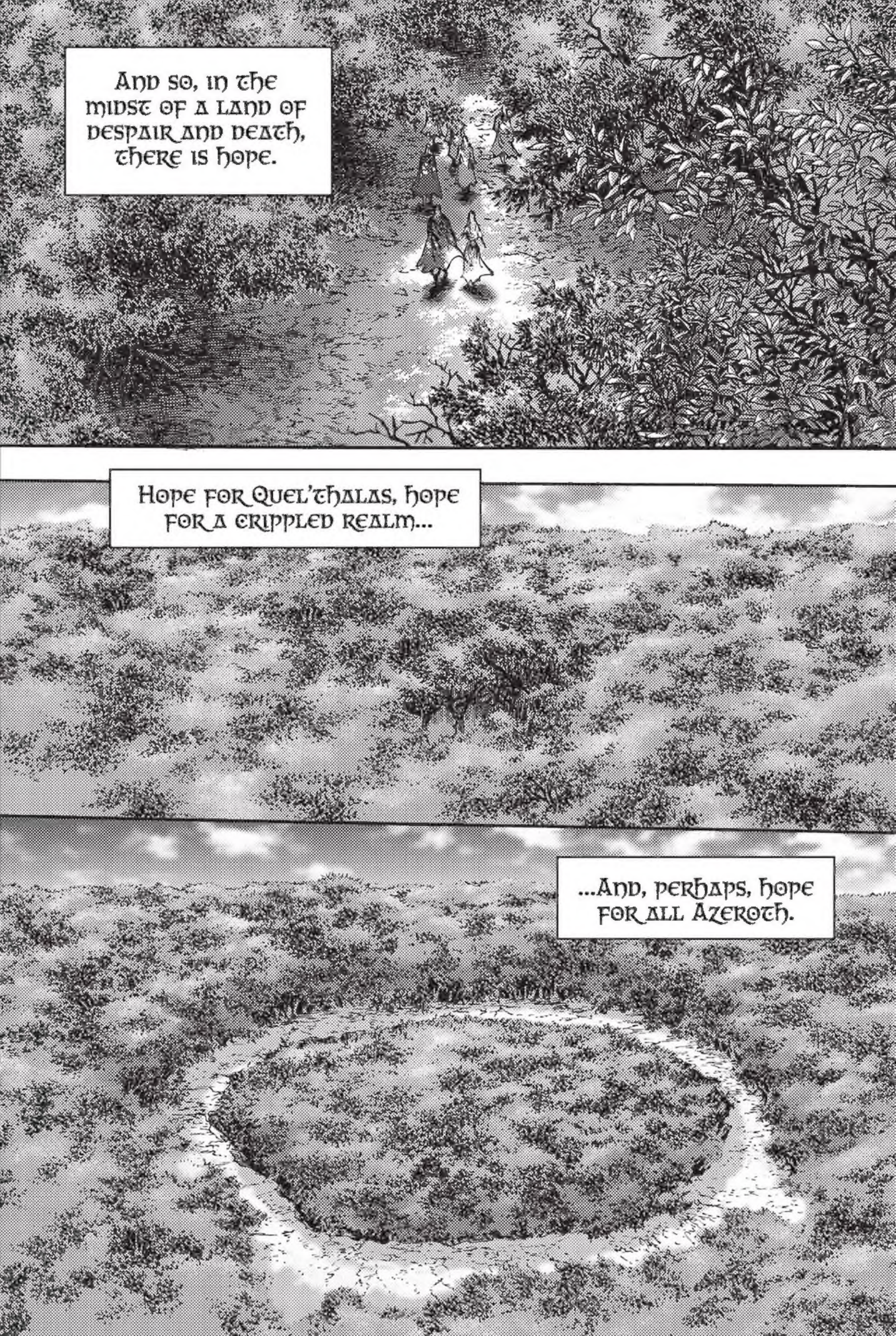
I BELIEVED I CREATED A MERE, IF MASTERFUL, ILLUSION TO HIDE IT...
...BUT THE ILLUSION BECAME LIFE ON ITS OWN, SOMETHING I NEVER EXPECTED.
THEN WE SHOULD LEAVE THIS PLACE.
A WISE SUGGESTION. NOW THAT YOU'RE FIT, NOTHING HOLDS US HERE.
READY, ANVEENA?
I'M NOT GOING, KALEC. MY PLACE IS HERE.
I KNOW WHO AND WHAT I AM NOW. I MUST WAIT HERE...FOR WHEN I'M NEEDED.
LOR'THEMAR HAS SWORN HIS BAND TO HER. THEY WILL STAY ALSO.
AND TO ALL OUTSIDE EYES, EVEN ARTHAS', THIS PLACE WILL STILL BE BARREN. SHE HAS SUCH POWER.
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE BANSHEE? SYLVANAS?

BEFORE SHE SLIPPED AWAY, SYLVANAS SWORE TO KEEP THE SECRET. SHE IS NO FRIEND OF ARTHAS...AND SHE STILL RECALLS WHAT SHE ONCE SERVED.
YOU SEE? NOW, COME! LET'S BE OFF!
NO...I'M STAYING, TOO.
KALEC... YOU DON'T HAVE TO...
BUT I WILL. I SWORE TO WATCH OVER YOU. I CAN'T LEAVE YOU.
BUT--
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND... TYRYGOSA.
VERY WELL... KALECGOS.
I MUST DEPART, BUT IN MY STEAD SHALL STAY ANOTHER.
RAAC!
SHOULD YOU REQUIRE ME, THROUGH HIM I WILL KNOW...


WATCH HER WELL, YOUNG BLUE! THE TIME IS GROWING NIGH WHEN IT WILL BE DEMANDED OF HER TO DO WHAT SHE MUST.
I'LL BE READY.
AND I'LL STAND WITH HER. I SWEAR IT.
THEN THERE IS NO MORE FOR ME TO SAY, BUT... GOODBYE!
I WILL TELL MALYGOS ALL THAT HAS HAPPENED.
THANK YOU... TYRI.

IT WAS AN HONOR TO FIGHT BESIDE YOU, GREAT O-- ANVEENA.
I'LL MISS YOU... AND YOU, TOO, JORAD.
WHERE WILL YOU GO?
JORAD WISHES ME TO FLY HIM BACK TOWARD HIS FORMER HOME.
'TIS TIME I SETTLED MATTERS WITH MY LORD...WITH ARTHAS.
BE CAREFUL, BOTH OF YOU.
FARE YOU WELL, YOU TWO!

MISTRESS? IT WOULD BE BEST NOT TO KEEP OURSELVES REVEALED MUCH LONGER.
YOU'RE RIGHT, LOR'THEMAR. KALEC?
COMING.


And so, in the midst of a land of despair and death, there is hope.
Hope for Quel'thalas, hope for a crippled realm...
...And, perhaps, hope for all Azeroth.

MONARCH